

SYSTEM OF NATURE;

OR.

THE LAWS .

OF THE

MORAL AND PHYSICAL WORLD.

TRANSLATED FROM THE PRENCH OF

M. MIRABAUD,

ONE OF THE FORTY MEMBERS OF, AND PERPETUAL SECRETARY TO, THE FRENCH ACADEMY.

"Naturæ rerum vis atque majestas in omnibus momentis side
"caret, si quis modo partes ejus, ae non totam complectatur
"animo."
"PLIN HIST. NATUR. LIB. VII.

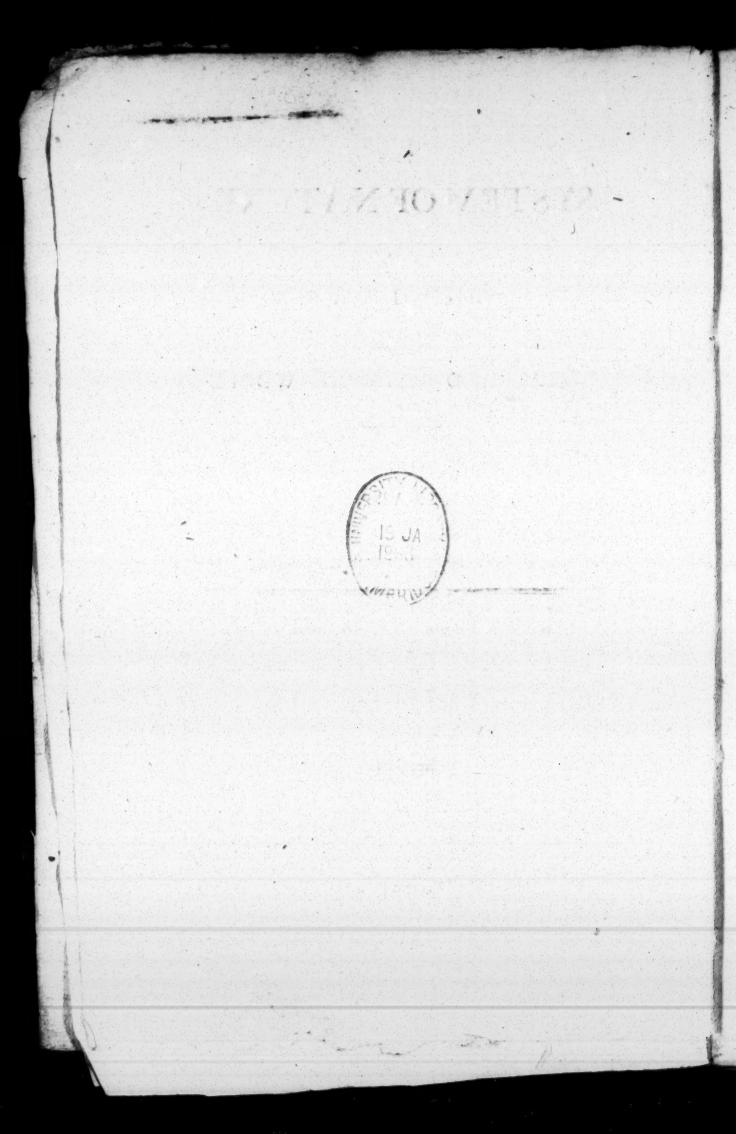
PART THE FIRST.

VOL. THE SECOND.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR G. KEARSLEY, NO 46, FLEET-STREET.

1797.



CONTENTS OF SECOND VOLUME.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.	
	PAGE
Of the System of the Liberty of Man	329
CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.	
CHAPTER THE IWELFIA.	
An Examination of the Opinion	
that pretends that the System of	
Fatalism is dangerous	390
CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.	
Of the Immortality of the Soul; of	
the Doctrine of a future Life; of	
the Fear of Death	445
CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.	
Education, Morals and the Laws	
fuffice to refrain Men. Of the	
	502
CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.	
Of the Interests of Men, or of the	
Ideas that they form to themselves	
of Happiness. Man cannot be able	
to be happy without Virtue	507
to be happy without villue	537

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

The Errors of Men upon what conflitutes Happiness are the true Source of their Evils.—Remedies that we are willing to apply to them

575

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

Those Ideaswhich are true or founded upon Nature, are the only Remedies for the Evils of Men. Recapitulation of this first Part. Conclusion

605

SYTSTEM OF NATURE.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

OF THE SYSTEM OF THE LIBERTY OF MAN.

THOSE who have pretended that the sour was distinguished from the body, was immaterial, drew its ideas from its own peculiar source, acted by itself, and without the aid of any exterior object; by a consequence of their system have enfranchised it from the physical laws, according to which all the beings of which we have knowledge are obliged to act. They have believed that this sour was mistress of its own conduct, could be able to regulate its own peculiar operations, determine its will by its own natural energy;

energy; in a word, they have pretended that man was free.

We have already fufficiently proved, that this soul is nothing more than the body confidered relatively to fome of its functions more concealed than the others. We have shewn that this soul, when even they shall have supposed it immaterial, was perpetually modified conjointly with the body, submitted to all its motions without which it would remain inert and dead; confequently it is fubmitted to the influence of the material and physical causes which move the body, of which the mode of being, whether habitual or transitory, depends on the material elements that form its texture, that constitute its temperament, that enter into it by the means of the aliments, that penetrate it and that furround it. We have explained, in a manner entirely physical and natural, the mechanism that constitutes the faculties which they have called INTELLEC-TUAL, and the qualities which they have called MORAL. We have in the last place proved that all our ideas—all our fystemsall our affections-all the notions, whether true or false, that we form to ourselves, are to be attributed to our physical and material fenses. Thus man is a physical being; in whatever manner they confider him, he is connected to universal Nature, and submitted to the necessary and immutable laws that the impofes in all the beings that she contains, after the particular effences or the properties that she gives them, without confulting them. Our life is a line that Nature orders us to describe upon the surface of the earth, without our ever being able to fwerve from it, even for an instant. We are born without our confent, our organization does not in any manner depend upon ourselves, our ideas come to us involuntarily, our habits are in the power of those who cause us to contract them, we are without ceafing modified by causes, whether visible or concealed, which neceffarily regulate our mode of being, of thinking, and of acting. We are good or bad -happy or miferable-wife or foolish --- reasonable or irrational, without our will going for any thing in these different states. Nevertheless, in despite of the continual shackles that bind us, they pretend that we are free, or that we determine our actions, and our condition, independently of the causes that move us.

However little founded this opinion may be, of which every thing ought to undeceive us, it is current at this day, in the minds of a great number of people, extremely enlightened otherwife, for an inconteftable truth; it is the basis of religion which, in fuppofing relations between man and the unknown Being that they have placed above Nature, has not been able to imagine that he could merit or determine of this Being if he was not at liberty in his actions. They have believed fociety interested in this system, because they have supposed that if all the actions of men were to be regarded as necessary, they would no longer have the right to punish those who injure their affociates. At length, human vanity accommodated itself to an hypothesis which, without doubt, appeared to distinguish

man

man from all the other physical beings, in affigning to our species the special appendage of a total independence of other causes, of which, if they had only reflected for a little, they had felt the impossibility.

A part fubordinate to the great whole, man, is obliged to experience its influence. To be free, it were needful that he was alone stronger than the entire of Nature, or it were needful that he was out of this Nature, who always in action herfelf, obliges all the beings that she embraces, to act and to concur to her general action, or as we have faid elsewhere. to conserve her active life by the action or motion that all the beings produce, in consequence of their particular energies, fubmitted to fixed, eternal and immutable laws. In order that man might be free, it were needful that all the beings should lofe their effences for him, it needful that he should no longer have any phyfical fenfibility, that he should know neither good nor evil-neither pleafure nor pain. But from thence he would no longer be in a state, either to conserve VOL. II. B himfelf himself, or to render his existence happy; all the beings would become indifferent to him, he would no longer have any choice—he would no longer know that which he ought to love or fear—to search after or to avoid. In short man would be an unnatural being, or totally incapable of acting in the manner in which we have a knowledge of him.

If it is the actual effence of man to tend to his well-being, or to be willing to conferve himself; if all the motions of his machine are the necessary consequences of this primitive impulsion; if pain warns him of that which he ought to avoid, if pleafure announces to him that which he ought to defire, it is in his effence to love that which excites or that from which he expects agreeable fenfations, and to hate that which procures him or which makes him fear contrary impressions. It must necessarily be, that he may be attracted, or that his will may be determined by those objects that he judges useful, and repelled by those that he believes prejudicial to his permanent or transitory mode of existence. It

is only by the aid of experience that man acquires the faculty of knowing that which he ought to love or fear; his organs, are they found? his experience will be true, he will have reason, prudence, forefight, he will foresee effects frequently very remote; he will know that, that which he fometimes judges to be a good, can be able to become an evil by its necessary or probable confequences, and that, that which must be to him a transient evil, may be able to procure him, by its confequence a folid and durable good. It is thus that experience enables us to know that the amputation of a limb will cause us a painful fensation, in consequence we are obliged to fear this operation or to avoid the pain; but if experience has shewn to us that the transitory pain that this amputation will cause us, may be able to save our life; our confervation being dear to us, we are obliged to fubmit ourselves to this momentary pain, with a view of procuring a good that will overbalance it.

The will, as we have faid elsewhere, is modification of the brain, by which it is

B 2 disposed

disposed to action, or prepared to give play to the organs that it is capable of moving. This will is necessarily determined by the quality, good or bad-agreeable or difagreeable, of the object or the motive that acts upon our fenses, or of which the idea remains with us, and is furnished to us by memory. In confequence we act necesfarily, our action is a consequence of the impulsion which we have received from this motive-from this object or from this idea, which has modified our brain, or difposed our will; when we do not act, it is because there comes some new cause, fome new motive, fome new idea, which modifies our brain in a different manner. which gives it a new impulsion, a new will, according to which either it acts or its action is fuspended. It is thus that the fight of an agreeable object, or its idea determines our will to act to procure it for us; but a new object or a new idea annihilates the effect of the first, and prevents our acting to procure it. Here is the mode in which reflexion, experience, reason, necessarily arrests or suspends the actions

actions of our will, without this it would necessarily have followed the first impulsions that carried it towards a desirable object. In all this we always act according to necessary laws.

When tormented with a violent thirst, I figure to myfelf in idea, or I really perceive a fountain, of which the limpid streams can be able to quench my drought. am I fufficiently master to desire or not to defire the object that can be capable of fatisfying fo lively a want, in the state in which I am? They will agree with me without doubt, that it is impossible I should not be willing to fatisfy it; but they will fay, that if they announce to me in this moment that the water which I defire is poisoned, in despite of my excesfive thirst, I shall not fail to abstain myfelf from it, and they have falfely concluded that I am free. Indeed in the fame manner that thirst necessarily determined me to drink, before I knew that the water was poisoned, this new discovery necessarily determines me not to drink; then the defire of conferving my-

felf, annihilates or fufpends the primitive impulsion that drought gave to my will; this fecond motive becomes stronger than the first, the fear of death necessarily prevails over the painful fenfation that thirst made me experience. But you will fay, if the thirst is very ardent, without regarding the danger, an inconfiderate man will be able to risk drinking this water; in this case the first impulsion will regain the afcendency, and will necessarily cause him to act, feeing that it finds itself stronger than the fecond. Nevertheless, in either case, whether he drinks of this water. or whether he does not drink of it, thefe two actions will be equally necessary, they will be the effect of the motive that finds itself the most puissant, and which acts in the strongest manner upon the will.

This example will ferve to explain all the phænomena of the will. The will, or rather the brain, finds itself then in the same situation as a bowl, which although it has received an impulsion, that drives it forward in a straight line, is deranged in its direction as soon as a force greater than the

first

first obliges it to change this direction. who drinks the water that they have told him is poisoned appears to us a mad man, but the actions of fools are as necessary as those of the most prudent people. The motives that determine the voluptuary and the debauchee to risk their health are as powerful, and their actions are as neceffary, as those which determine the wife man to manage his. But, you will infift, they can be able to prevail upon a debauchee to change his conduct; this does not imply that he is free, but that they can be able to find motives fufficiently powerful to annihilate the effect of those that acted previously upon him; and then these new motives will determine his will, as necesfarily as the first, to the new mode of condust that he may adopt.

When the action of the will is suspended, they say that we deliberate; this is what happens when two motives act alternately upon us. To deliberate, is to love and hate alternately; it is to be successively attracted and repelled; it is to be moved sometimes by one motive and

fome-

fometimes by another. We only deliberate when we do not fufficiently know the qualities of the objects that move us, or when experience has not fufficiently apprifed us of the effects, more or less remote, that our actions will produce upon ourselves. I would go out to take the air, but the weather is uncertain; I deliberate in consequence; I weigh the different motives that urge my will alternately to go out or not to go out; I am at length determined by that motive which is most probable, this removes my indecision, and it necessarily carries my will either to go out or remain within: this motive is always the prefent or diftant advantage that I find in the action to which I am perfuaded.

Our will is frequently suspended between two objects, of which the presence or the ideas move us alternately, then we wait to act until we have contemplated the objects which solicit us to different actions, or the ideas which they have left in our brain. We then compare these objects or these ideas, but even in the time

of

of deliberation, during the comparison, and these alternatives of love or of hatred, which fometimes fucceed each other with the utmost rapidity, we are not free an inftant, the good or the evil that we believe we find fuccessively in the objects, are the necessary motives of these momentary wills, of these rapid motions of love or of fear that we experience as long as our uncertainty continues. From whence they fee that deliberation is necessary, that uncertainty is necessary, and that whatever part we shall take, in consequence of the deliberation, it will always necessarily be that which we have judged, either well or ill, must probably be the most advantageous for us.

When the foul is struck by two motives that act alternately upon it, or that modify it successively, it deliberates; the brain is in a fort of equilibrium, accompanied with perpetual oscillations, sometimes towards one object sometimes towards another, until the object that carries it along the most forcibly, shall draw it out of this suspense, in which consists the indecision of our will.

VOL. II.

C

But

But when the brain is affailed at one and the fame time by causes equally strong, that move it according to their opposite directions, agreeable to the general law of all bodies, when they are struck equally by contrary forces, it stops, it is in nifu, it can neither be able to will nor act, it waits until one of the two causes that move it has obtained sufficient force to determine its will, to attract it in a manner that shall prevail over the efforts of the other cause.

This mechanism, so simple and so natural, suffices to make us understand, for why uncertainty is painful, and suspence always a violent state for man. The brain, this organ, so delicate and so moveable, experiences then very rapid modifications that satigue it, or when it is urged in contrary ways, by causes equally powerful, it suffers a kind of compression, that prevents it from acting with the activity that is convenient to it for the confervation of the whole, and to procure for it that which is advantageous. This mechanism explains also the irregularity,

the inconclusiveness, the inconstancy of men, and accounts to us for their conduct, which frequently appears an inexplicable mystery, and which indeed it is in the received fystems. In confulting experience, we shall find that our Soul is sub mitted to the fame physical laws as the material body. If the will of each individual was not, in a given time, moved but by a fingle cause or passion, nothing would be more easy than to foresee his actions; but his heart is frequently affailed by contrary motives or powers, that act all at once, or fuccessively upon him. It is then that his brain is either pulled in opposite directions that fatigue it, or else it is in a state of compression that torments it, and which deprives it of all activity. Sometimes it is in an incommodious and total inaction, fometimes it is the fport of the alternative shocks that it is obliged to experience. Such is, without doubt, the state in which the man appears to find himfelf, in whom a lively passion folicits him to commit a crime, whilst fear points out to him the danger

attending it. Such also is the state of him, in whom remorfe prevents his enjoying the objects that crime has obtained for him, by the continual labours of his diftracted Soul, &c.

If the powers or causes, whether exterior or interior, that act upon the mind of man, tend towards different points, his Soul or his brain, as well as all bodies, will take a mean direction between the two powers; and, in confequence of the violence with which the foul is urged, the state of man is fometimes so painful that his existence becomes troublesome to him; he no longer tends to the confervation of his being; he feeks after death as a fanctuary against himself, and as the only remedy to his defpair; it is thus that we fee men miserable and discontented with themselves, voluntarily destroy themselves, whenever life becomes insupportable to them. Man can be able to cherish his existence only so long as life holds out charms to him; but when he is wrought upon by painful fenfations, or by contrary impulfions, his natural tendency is deranged; ranged; he is obliged to follow a new route, that conducts him to his end, and which it displays to him even as a defirable good. Here is the manner in which we can be able to explain to ourselves the conduct of those melancholy beings whose vicious temperament, whose tortured conscience, whose chagrin and ennui, determine them sometimes to renounce life.*

The various and frequently complicated forces that act fuccessively or simultaneously upon the brain of men, and which modify them so diversly in the different periods of their duration, are the true causes of the obscurity of morals, and of the difficulties that we find, when we would unravel the concealed springs of their ænigmatical conduct. The heart of man is only a labyrinth to us, because we

See CHAPTER FOURTEENTH, the pains of the mind determine men much more than the pains of the body to destroy themselves. A thousand causes give a diversion to the pains of the body, in lieu of which, in the uneasiness of the mind, the brain is as it were absorbed in the ideas that it carries within itself. For the same reason, the pleasures that they call intellection, are the greatest of all.

have

have very rarely the necessary gift of judging of it; we shall see then that his circumstances, his inconclusiveness, the conduct, ridiculous or unexpected, that he holds, are only the effects of motives that fuccessively determine his will, dependent on the frequent variations that his machine experiences, and are the neceffary confequences of the changes that are operated in him. After these variations, the fame motives have not always the fame influence upon his will, the fame objects have no longer the right to please him, his temperament has changed for a moment, or for ever; it must be of consequence that his tastes, his defires, his passions will change, and that there will be no kind of uniformity in his conduct, nor certitude in the effects that we may be able to expect.

Choice does by no means prove the liberty of man; he only deliberates when he does not yet know which to choose of the many objects that move him; he is then in an embarrassment, that only terminates when his will is de-

cided

cided by the idea of the greater advantage he believes he shall find in the object that he chooses, or the action that he undertakes. From whence we fee, that his choice is necessary, feeing that he would not determine for an object, or for an action, if he did not believe that he should find in it some advantage for himfelf. That man might be able to act freely. it were needful that he could be able to will or choose without motive, or that he could be able to prevent motives from acting upon his will. Action being always an effect of the will, once determined, and the will not being able to be determined but by the motive, which is not in our power, it follows that we are never the masters of the determinations of our own peculiar will, and that confequently we never act freely. They have believed that we were free, because we had a will and the power of choosing, but they have not paid attention, that our will is moved by causes independent of us, inherent in our organization, or which belong to the nature of the beings which move us*. Am I the master of willing not to withdraw my hand, when I fear I shall be burnt? or am I the master of taking away from fire the property that makes me fear it? am I the master of not choosing by preference a mess of meat that I know to be agreeable or analogous to my palate, and of not preferring it to that which I know to be disagreeable or dangerous? It is always according to my sensations, and my own peculiar experience, or my suppositions, that I judge of things, well or ill, but whatever may be my judgment, it depends necessarily upon my mode of feeling habitual or momen-

* Man passes a great part of his life without even willing. His will attends the motives that determine it. If a man was to render an exact account of every thing that he does each day, from his rising in the morning, to his laying down at night to sleep, he would find that all his actions have not been in the least voluntary, and that they have been mechanical, habitual, determined by causes that he was not able to foresee, and to which he was obliged, or allured to acquiesce. He would discover that the motive of his labours—of his amusements—of his discourses—of his thoughts, &c. have been necessary, and have evidently either seduced him or drawn him along.

tary, and upon the qualities that I find, and which exist in despite of me, in the cause that moves me, or which my mind supposes to move me.

All the causes which act upon the will, must have acted upon us in a manner sufficiently marked to give us some sensation, fome perception, fome idea, whether complete or incomplete, whether true or false. As foon as my will is determined, I must have felt either strongly or feebly, without which I should be determined without motive. Thus to fpeak exactly, there are no causes that are truly INDIFFERENT to the will: however feeble the impulsions may be that we receive, whether on the part of the objects themselves, whether on the part of their images or ideas; as foon as our will acts, these impulsions have been causes sufficient to determine it. In confequence of a flight and feeble impulsion we shall will feebly, it is this weakness in our will that they have called INDIFFERENCE. brain perceives with difficulty the motion that it has received, it acts in confequence with lefs vigour to obtain or to remove the VOL. II. D

object or the idea that has modified it. If the impulsion had been strong the will would be strong, and it would have made us act vigorously to obtain or to remove the object that should appear to us, either very agreeable or very incommodious.

They have believed that man was free, because they have imagined that his foul could at will recall its ideas, which fometimes fufficed to give a check to his most violent desires.* It is thus that the idea of a remote evil fometimes prevents us from giving ourselves up to an actual and prefent good. It is thus that a remembrance, an infensible and slight modification of our brain, annihilates at each instant the real objects that act upon our will. But we are not the masters of recalling to ourselves our ideas at will; their affociation is independent of us; they are without our knowledge, and in defpite of us arranged in our brain; they have made there an impression more or less profound, our memory itself depends upon our orga-

nization,

^{*} St. Augustine fays, non enim cuiquam in pote the est quid veniat in mentem.

nization, its fidelity depends upon the habitual or momentary state in which we find ourselves; and when our will is vigoroufly determined by fome object or idea that excites in us a very lively passion, the objects or the ideas that could be able to arrest us disappear from our mind; then we shut our eyes to the present dangers that menace us, or of which the idea ought to make us forbear, we march headlong towards the object that hurries us on; reflexion cannot be able to operate any way upon us; we fee nothing but the object of our defires, and the falutary ideas that could be able to ftop us, do not prefent themselves to us, or do not present themselves but too feebly or too late to prevent us from acting. Such is the case of all those who, blinded by some firong passion, are not in a state to recall to themselves the motives of which the idea alone ought to make them forbear; the trouble in which they are, prevents them from judging foundly—from forefeeing the confequence of their actions-from applying their experience-from making use of their reason,

D 2

operations

operations that suppose a justness in the manner of affociating our ideas, of which our brain is no more capable, in consequence of the momentary delirium that it experiences, than our hand is capable of writing whilst we are taking violent exercise.

Our modes of thinking are necessarily determined by our modes of being; they depend then on our natural organization, and the modifications that our machine receives independantly of our will. From whence we are obliged to conclude that our thoughts-our reflexions-our manner of feeing-of feeling-of judging-of combining ideas, cannot be able to be either voluntary or free. In a word, our foul is not mistress of the motion that is excited in it, nor of reprefenting to itself when wanted, the images or the ideas which can be able to counterbalance the impulsions that it receives elsewhere. Here is the reason why in a passion we cease to reafon; reason is as impossible to be heard then, as it is in an extacy or in drunkenness. The wicked are never more than men drunk

drunk or mad; if they reason, it is not until tranquillity is re-established in their machine, and then the tardy ideas that present themselves to their mind, permit them to see the consequence of their actions, ideas that bring on them that trouble which they have designated under the name of SHAME, REGRET, REMORSE.

The errors of the philosophers on the liberty of man, has arisen from their regarding his will as the primum mobile or first mover of his actions, and of which, for want of recurring further back, they have not feen the multiplied and complicated causes, that independently of him give motion to this will itself, or which difpose and modify the brain, whilst he is purely paffive in the motion that he receives. Am I the master of not desiring an object that appears defirable to me? No, without doubt you will fay; but you are the master of resisting your desire, if you reflect upon the confequences. But am I the mafter of reflecting on these consequences, when my Soul is hurried along by a very lively passion that depends upon

my natural organization, and the causes that modify it? Is it in my power to add to these consequences all the weight neceffary to counterbalance my defire? Am I the master of preventing the qualities that render an object defirable to me from refiding in it? You ought to have learnt, they will tell me, to refift your passions and to contract the habit of putting a curb on your defires. I agree to it without any difficulty. But I reply, has my Nature been fusceptible of being thus modified; my boiling blood, my unruly imagination, the fire that circulates in my veins, have they permitted me to make and to apply true experience in the moment when I wanted it? And when my temperament had rendered me capable, education, example, the ideas with which they have inspired me in early life, have they been fuitable to make me contract the habit of repressing my defires? All thefe things have they not rather contributed to make me fearch after and defire those objects which you tell me I ought to refit? You will have

me, fays the AMBITIOUS, relift my passion? have they not repeated to me, without ceafing, that rank, honours, power are defirable advantages? Have I not feen my fellow citizens envy them, the nobles of my country facrifice every thing to obtain them? In the fociety in which I live, am I not obliged to feel, that if I am deprived of these advantages, I must expect to languish in contempt and cringe under oppression? You will forbid me, fays the MISER, to love money and to feek after the means of acquiring it? Alas! does not every thing tell me, that in this world money is the greatest of bleffings, that it is fufficient to render me happy? In the country that I inhabit, do I not fee all my fellow citizens covetous of riches, and but little fcrupulous upon the means of procuring them? As foon as they are enriched by those means which you cenfure, are they not cherifhed, confidered, and respected? By what authority then do you defend me from amassing treasure by the fame means that I fee approved by the fovereign, although you call them fordid 4

fordid and criminal? You will have me then renounce my happiness? You pretend, favs the VOLUPTUARY, that I should refift my defires? But am I the mafter of my temperament, that unceasingly invites me to pleasure? You call my pleasures difgraceful? But in the country that I live in, I fee men the most dissipated, frequently enjoying the most distinguished rank; I fee no one ashamed of the adultery but the husband that it has outraged; I fee men make trophies of their debaucheries, and of their libertinism. You advise me to put a curb on my passions, fays the CHOLERIC MAN, and to refift the defire of revenging myfelf? But I cannot conquer my Nature; and befide, in fociety I shall infallibly be dishonoured, if I do not wash out in the blood of my fellow creature the injuries I have received. You recommend to me, mildness and indulgence for the opinions of my fellow men, will fay the ZEALOUS ENTHUSIAST? But my temperament is violent; I ardently love my God; they affure me that zeal is pleafing to him, and that fanguinary and inhuman

inhuman persecutors have been his friends; I wish by the same means to render myself agreeable in his eyes.

In a word, the actions of men are never free; they are always the neceffary consequence of their temperament, of their received ideas, of the notions, true or false, that they have formed to themselves of happiness, in short, of their opinions strengthened by example, by education, by daily experience. We fee fo many crimes upon the earth, only because every thing conspires to render men criminal and vicious; their religions -their governments-their education, the examples that they have under their eyes, irrefiftibly drive them on to evil; morals then in vain preaches virtue to them, which is only a painful facrifice of happiness in those societies where vice and crimes are perpetually crowned, efteemed, recompenced, and where the most dreadful disorders are only punished in those who are too weak to have the right of committing them with impunity. Society chastifes in the lower orders, VOL. II. F thofe

those excesses that it respects in the higher ranks of life, and frequently it has the injustice to decree death to those, whom the public prejudices that it maintains, have rendered criminal.

Man is not free then, in any one instant of his life; he is necessarily guided at each step by the advantages real or sictitious that he attaches to the objects that excite his passions. These passions are necessary in a Being that tends unceasingly towards happiness; their energy is necesfary, fince they depend on his temperahis temperament is necessary, ment: fince it depends on the phyfical elements that enter into his composition: the modifications of this temperament are necessary, fince they are the infallible and inevitable confequences of the mode in which phyfical and moral beings inceffantly act upon

In despite of these proofs, so clear, of the non-liberty of man, they will yet insist perhaps, and they will tell us, that if they propose to some one to move or not to move the hand, an action in the number of those that we call INDIFFERENT. he appears evidently the mafter of choofing, which proves that he is free. I reply that in this example the man for fome action that he is refolved to do. does not by any means prove his liberty; the defire of shewing his liberty, excited by the dispute, becomes then a necessary motive that decides his will for the one or the other of these motions; that which deludes him, or that which perfuades him that he is free in this moment, is that he does not difcern the true motive that makes him act, this is the defire of convincing me. If in the heat of the dispute, he insists and demands, am I not the master of throwing myself out of the window? I shall tell him no, and that whilst he shall conferve his reason, there is not a probability that the defire of proving to me his liberty, will become a motive fufficiently powerful to make him facrifice his life: if my adverfary, notwithstanding this, did throw himself out of the window, to prove to me that he is free, I should not conclude that he acted freely freely in this, but that it was the violence of his temperament that carried him to this folly. Madness is a state that depends upon the heat of the blood, and not upon the will. A fanatic, or an hero braves death as necessarily as a man more phlegmatic, or as a coward slies from it*.

They tell us that liberty is the absence of those obstacles that can be able to oppose themselves to our actions, or the exer-

* There is no difference between a man that is thrown out of the window, and a man that throws himself out of the window, fave only that the impulfion that acts upon the first, comes from without, and that the impulsion that determines the fall of the fecond, comes from within his own peculiar machine. MUTIUS SCAVOLA, who held his hand in the fire was as necessitated by the interior motives that urged him to this strange action, as if strong men had held his arm. Pride, the defire of braving his enemy, of aftonishing him, of intimidating him, despair, &c. were the invisible chains that held him bound in the fire. The love of glory, enthusiasin for their country in like manner, obliged Codrus and Decius to devote themselves for their fellow citizens. The Indian CALANUS, and the philosopher Peregrinus, were equally obliged to burn themselves, by the defire of exciting the aftonishment of the Grecian affembly.

cife of our faculties: they will pretend that we are free every time that in making use of these faculties they operate the effect that we had proposed to ourselves. But to reply to this objection, it is fufficient to confider that it does not depend upon us, to place or to take away the obstacles that determine us or arrest us; the motive that causes us to act is no more in our power than the obstacle that stops us, whether this motive or this obstacle may be within ourselves or exterior to us. I am not mafter of the thought that comes into my mind and determines my will; this thought is excited in me by reason of some cause independent of myself.

Toundeceive ourselves of the system of the liberty of man, the question is simply to recur to the motive that determines his will, and we shall always find that this motive is out of his power. You say that in consequence of an idea that is born in your mind you act freely if you encounter no obstacles. But what is it that gives birth to this idea in your brain? Were you the master of preventing it from pre-

fenting itself or from renewing itself in your brain? This idea, does it not depend upon objects that ftrike you exteriorly in despite of you, or upon causes that, without your knowledge, act within yourfelf, and modify your brain? Can you prevent your eyes cast without design upon any object whatever from giving you the idea of this object, and from moving your brain? You are not more master of the obstacles; they are the necessary effects of causes either existing interiorly or exteriorly of you, these causes always act by reason of their properties. A man infults a coward, this necessarily irritates himself against him, but his will cannot be able to vanquish the obstacle that cowardice places to the accomplishment of his defires, becaufe his natural conformation, which does not depend upon himfelf, prevents him from having courage. In this cafe the coward is insulted in despite of himself. and obliged against his will to patiently brook the infult that is given him.

The partifans of the fystem of liberty, appear to have always confounded conftraint

ftraint with necessity. We believe we act freely every time that we do not see any thing that places obstacles to our actions; we do not feel that the motive that causes us to will is always necessary and independent of ourselves. A prisoner loaded with irons is compelled to remain in prison, but he is not free not to have the desire to save himself; his chains prevent him from acting, but they do not prevent him from willing; he will save himself if they loose his chains; but he will not save himself freely; fear or the idea of punishment are for him necessary motives.

Man may then be able to cease being constrained, without being at liberty for that reason; in whatever manner he acts he acts necessarily according to the motives that determine him. He may be compared to a heavy body, that finds itself arrested in its fall by any obstacle whatever; take away this obstacle, and the body will sollow its motion or will continue to fall; will they say that this body is free to fall? Its descent, is it not the necessary effect of its specific gravity? Socrates, that virtu-

ous man submitted to the laws of his country, even though they were unjust, would not fave himself from his prison, of which the doors were open to him, but in this he did not act freely; the invisible chains of opinion, of decorum, of respect for the laws, even when they were iniquitous, the fear of tarnishing his glory, kept him in his prison, and were motives fufficiently powerful with this enthusiast for virtue, to make him wait death with tranquillity; it was not in his power to fave himfelf, because he could not be able to bring himself to depart an instant from those principles to which his mind was accuftomed.

Men, they tell us, frequently act against their inclination, from whence they have concluded, that they are free; this conclusion is very false; when they appear to act against their inclination, they are determined to it by some motive sufficiently powerful to vanquish their inclination. A sick man, with the view of being cured, arrives at the conquering his repugnance to the most disgusting reme-

dies;

dies; the fear of pain or of death becomes then a necessary motive; consequently this fick man does not by any means act freely.

When we fay that man is not free, we do not pretend to compare him to a body fimply moved by an impulfive cause; he contains within himself causes inherent to his being, he is moved by an interior organ which has its own peculiar laws, and which is necessarily determined, in confequence of ideas, of perceptions, of fenfations that it receives from exterior objects. As the mechanism of these perceptions, of these fensations, and the manner in which these ideas engrave themselves in our brain, are not known to us, for want of being able to unravel all thefe motions, for want of perceiving the chain of the operations of our Soul, or the motive principle that acts within us, we fuppose it free, which literally translated, fignifies that it moves itself by itself, that it determines itself without cause; or rather that which should say that we are ignorant how and for why it acts in the VOL. II. manner manner it does. It is true they tell us the Soul enjoys an activity which is peculiar to itself; I consent to it, but it is certain that this activity would never display itself, if some motive or cause did not put it in a condition to exercise itself; at least they will not pretend that the Soul can be able to love or hate, without having been moved, without knowing the objects, without having some idea of their qualities. Gunpowder has, without doubt, a particular activity, but it will never display itself, if they do not apply fire to it, that shall oblige it to exercise itself.

It is the great complication of our motion, it is the variety of our actions, it is the multiplicity of causes that move us; whether at one and the same time, or successively and without interruption, which persuades us that we are free. If all the motions of man were simple; if the causes that move us did not confound themselves, were distinct; if our machine was less complicated, we should see that all our actions are necessary, because

to the cause that made us act. A man that should be always obliged to go towards the west, would always go on that side, but he would feel extremely well, that he did not go freely. If we had another sense, as our actions or our motions, augmented by a sixth, would be still more varied and more complicated, we should believe ourselves still more free than we do with sive sense.

It is then for want of recurring to the causes that move us; it is for want of being able to analyze and decompose the complicated motions that take place in us that we believe ourselves free; it is only upon our ignorance that they found this sentiment so prosound, and yet so deceitful, that we have of our liberty, and which they produce to us, as a striking proof of this pretended liberty. If for a little, each man was willing to examine his own peculiar actions, to search their true motives, to discover the concatenation, he would remain convinced, that the senti-

ment which he has of his natural liberty, is a chimera that experience must speedily destroy.

Nevertheless we must avow, that the multiplicity and the diversity of the causes that act upon us frequently without our knowledge, renders it impossible, or at least extremely difficult, to recur to the true principles of our own peculiar actions, and again much less of the actions of others: they frequently depend upon causes so fugitive, fo distant from their effects, that appear to have fo little analogy and relation with them, that it requires a fingular fagacity to be able to discover them. Here is what renders the study of the moral man fo difficult; here is the reason why his heart is an abyfs, of which frequently we cannot fathom the depth. We are then obliged to content ourfelves with a knowledge of the general and necessary laws, that regulate the human heart; in the individuals of our species they are the fame, and never vary but in confequence of the organization that is peculiar to them, and the modifications

that

this

that they experience, which are not, and cannot be able to be rigorously the fame. It fuffices for us to know, that by his effence, mankind tends to conferve himfelf, and to render his existence happy; this granted, whatever may be his actions, we can never deceive ourfelves upon their motives, when we recur to this first principle; to this general and necessary motive-power of all our Man, for want of reason and experience deceives himfelf, without doubt, frequently upon the means of arriving at this end; or elfe the means that he employs are unpleasant to us, because they are prejudicial to ourselves; or in short, the means of which he avails himfelf, appear to us irrational; because they remove him fometimes from the end to which he would approach himself; but whatever may be these means, they have always necessarily and invariably for object an existing or imaginary happiness; durable or transitory, analogous to his mode of being, of feeling, and of thinking. It is from having mistaken

this truth, that the greater part of the moral philosophers, have made rather the romance than the history of the human heart; they have attributed his actions fictitious causes, and have not least known the necessary motives of his conduct, Politicians and legislators have been in the fame state of ignorance, or elfe impostors have found it much shorter to employ imaginary motive-powers, than those which had existence; they have rather loved to make men tremble under incommodious phantoms, than to guide them to virtue by the road of happiness, fo conformable to the necessary defires of their Soul. So true it is, that error can never be able to be ufeful to the human species.

However it may be, in natural philosophy we see or we believe we see, much more distinctly the necessary reason of effects with their causes than in the human heart. At least we see in it sensible causes produce constantly sensible effects, always the same, when the circumstances are alike. After this we do not hesitate to

look upon physical effects as necessary. whilst we refuse to acknowledge necessity in the acts of the human will, which they have, without just foundation, attributed to a motive-power acting by its own peculiar energy, capable of modifying itself without the concurrence of exterior causes, and diftinguished from all the material and phyfical beings. ACRICULTURE is founded upon the affurance which experience gives us of being able to force the earth, cultivated and fown in a certain manner, when it has otherwife the requifite qualities, to furnish us with GRAIN or with FRUITS, necessary for our subsistence, or pleasing to our fenses. If they would consider things without prejudice, they would fee that in morals, education is nothing elfe than the AGRICULTURE OF THE MIND, and that, like the earth, by reason of its natural dispositions, of the culture that they give it, the fruits with which they fow it, the feafons more or less favourable that conduct it to maturity, we are affured that the foul will produce vice or virtue, MORAL FRUITS, ufeful or hurtful to fociety. Morals is

the science of the relations that subsist between the minds, the wills, and the actions of men, like as GEOMETRY is the science of the relations that are between bodies. Morals would be a chimera, and would have no certain principles if they did not found it upon the knowledge of the motives that must necessarily have an influence upon the human will, and determine the actions of men.

If in the moral world, as well as in the physical world, a cause, of which the action is not disturbed is necessarily followed by its effect, a reasonable education, founded upon wife truth. laws, honest principles, inspired in their vouth, virtuous examples, the esteem and the recompences accorded to merit and to good actions, the shame, the contempt, the rigorous chastifement, attached to vice and crime, are causes that would neceffarily act upon the will of men, that would determine the greater number to shew virtue amongst themselves. But if religion, politics, example, public opinion, labour to render men wicked and vicious: if they stifle and render useless, the good principles that their education has given them; if this education itself only serves to fill them with vice, with prejudice, with false and dangerous opinions; if it only kindles in them passions incommodious for themselves and for others, it must be of all necessity that the wills of the greater number, determine them to evil*. Here is, without doubt, from whence comes the universal corruption of which the moral philosophers complain with great justice, without ever shewing us the causes as true as they are neces-

* Many authors have felt the importance of a good education, but they have not felt that a good education was incompatible and totally impossible with the superstitions of men, that commences by rendering their minds false; with the arbitrary governments, that render them mean, contemptible, servile, and cringing, and which fear that they should be enlightened; with the laws, which are but too frequently contrary to good sense; with the received customs, which are contrary to good sense; with the public opinion, unfavorable to virtue; with the incapacity of masters, who are only in a state to communicate to their scholars the salse ideas, with which they are themselves insected!!!

Vol. II.

fary. They look for them to human Nature; they fay it is corrupted*; they blame man for loving himfelf, and for feeking after his happiness; they pretend that he must have supernatural assistance, to be enabled to do good; and in despite of this liberty which they attribute to him, they assure us that it is necessary to have nothing less than the author of Nature himself to destroy the wicked desires of his heart: but alas! this agent so powerful, can himself do nothing against the unhappy propensities, which in the fatal constitution of things,

* This is a very prejudicial doctrine, which shews us our Nature as corrupted, and which pretends that it needs a grace from Heaven to make it good. It tends necessarily to discourage men, to throw them into sluggishness or despair, in waiting for this grace. Men would always have this grace, if they were well educated and governed. It is a strange system of morals, this of the Theologians, that attributes all moral evil to an original sin, and all the good that we do to the pardon of it. We must not be surprised to see, that a moral system, sounded upon such ridiculous hypotheses, is of no essicacy. See the second part of this work, chapter the eighth, volume the fourth.

the most vigorous motive-powers give to the wills of men, and against the unhappy directions that they give to their natural They repeat to us inceffantly passions. to refift these passions; they defire us to stifle them, and to annihilate them in our heart: do they not fee that they are neceffary, that they are inherent in our Nature, that they are useful to our confervation, fince they have only for object to avoid that which can be able to injure us, and to procure for us that which can be able to be advantageous to our being? In short, do they not see that these passions well directed, that is to fay, carried towards objects that are truly interesting to ourselves and to others, would necessarily contribute to the real and permanent well-being of fociety. The passions of men are like fire, which is equally necessary to the wants of life, and capable of producing the most terrible and frightful ravages and devastation*.

^{*} The THEOLOGIANS themselves have felt the necessity of the passions, see a book of father senault which has for title, of the use of the passions.

Every thing becomes an impulsion for the will; a word frequently fuffices to modify a man for the whole course of his life, and to decide for ever his propenfities. An infant if he has burnt his finger, by having approached it close to a bougie, is warned for ever that he ought to abstain himself from a fimilar temptation. A man once punished and despised for having committed a dishonest action, is not tempted to continue it. Under whatever point of view we confider man, we never fee him act but after the impulsions that have been given to his will, whether by phyfical causes, or whether by other wills. The particular organization decides the nature of these impulsions; Souls act upon Souls that are analogous, inflamed and fiery imaginations act upon strong passions, and upon imaginations easy to be inflamed; the furprifing progrefs of enthusiasm, the hereditary propagation of fuperstition, the transmission of religious errors from race to race, the ardour with which they feize on the marvellous, are effects

effects as necessary as those which result from the action and re-action of bodies.

In despite of the ideas, so gratuitous, that men have formed to themselves of their pretended liberty; in despite of the illusions of this pretended INTIMATE SENSE, which maugre their experience, perfuades them that they are masters of their will, all their inftitutions are really founded upon necessity; in this, as in an infinity of occasions, practice throws aside speculation. Indeed if they did not suppose in certain motives which they prefent to mankind, the necessary power to determine their will, to arrest their passions, to direct them towards an end, to modify them, of what use would be the faculty of fpeech? What benefit could they be able to promife themselves from education, from legislation, from morals, even from religion itself? What does education, fave, give the first impulsions to the will of men, make them contract habits, oblige them to perfift in them, furnish them motives, true or false, to act after a certain manner? When a father menaces his fon with punishment,

or promifes him a recompense, is he not convinced that these things will act upon his will? What does legislation, fave, prefent to the citizens, of which a nation is composed, the motives that it supposes neceffary to determine them to perform fome actions, and to abstain themselves from performing fome others? What is the object of morals, if it is not to shew men that their interest exacts that they should repress their momentary passions, in view of a well-being more true and lasting than that which the gratification of their transitory desires can be able to procure for them? Religion in all countries, does it not suppose the human species, and the entire of nature, submitted to the irresistible will of a necessary Being, who regulates their condition after the eternal laws of immutable wifdom? This God whom men adore, is he not the absolute master of their deftiny? Is it not him who chooses and who rejects? The menaces and the promifes that religion fubflitutes to the true motive-powers that a reasonable policy ought to employ, are they not themselves founded

upon

upon the idea of the effects, that these chimeras must necessarily produce upon men, who are ignorant, searful, eager of the marvellous. In short this beneficent Divinity, who calls his creatures into existence, does he not force them, without their knowledge, and in despite of themselves, to play a part, from whence may result their happiness or their eternal misery.*

* All RELIGION is visibly and incontestibly founded upon fatalism; amongst the GREEKS they supposed that men were punished for their necessary faults, as we can fee in orestes, in Cedipus, &c. who only committed crimes predicted by the oracles. The CHRIS-TIANS, have made vain effects to justify the Divinity, in throwing the faults of men upon the FREE-WILL, which cannot be able to conciliate itself with PREDES-TINATION, a doctrine by which the christians re-enter into the fystem of fatality. The system of GRACE, cannot be able to draw them out of this difficulty, feeing that god does not give his grace, but to those whom he pleases. Religion, in all countries, has no other foundation, than the fatal decrees of an irrefillible Being who decides arbitrarily the destiny of his creatures. All the Theological hypotheses turn upon this point, and the Theologians, who regard the fystem of fatalism as false and dangerous, do not see that the FALL OF ANGELS, ORIGINAL SIN, the SYSTEM OF PREDESTINA-TION and of GRACE, the SMALL NUMBER OF THE ELECT.

EDUCATION is only then necessity shewn to children. LEGISLATION is neceffity shewn to the members of the body politic. Morals is the necessity of the relations that fubfift between men, shewn to reasonable beings. In short RELIGION is the law of a necessary being or necessity fhewn to ignorant and pufillanimous men. In a word, in every thing that they are, men grant NECESSITY, when they believe they have for them certain experience; and PROBABILITY, when they do not know the necessary connexion of causes with their effects; they would not act as they do, if they were not convinced, or if they did not prefume they were, that certain effects will necessarily follow the actions that they commit. The MORAL PHILOSOPHER preaches reason, because he believes it necessary to men; the PHI-LOSOPHER writes, because he presumes that TRUTH must necessarily prevail fooner or later over FALSHOOD; the THEOLOGIAN and the TYRANT, necessarily hate and ELECT, &c. invincibly prove that religion is a true fatalifin.

persecute

perfecute reason and truth, because they judge them to be prejudicial to their interests; the fovereign, who by his laws terrifies crimes, and who again more frequently renders them useful and necessary, prefumes that the motive-power that he employs, will fuffice to keep his fubjects within bounds. All reckon equally upon the power, or upon the necessity of the motives that they make use of, and flatter themselves either with, or without reason, that they will have an influence upon the conduct of men. Their education is commonly fo bad, or fo inefficacious, because it is regulated by prejudic : or when it is good, it is very fpe dily contradicted and annihilated by every thing that passes in society. Legislation and politics are frequently iniquitous; they kindle in the hearts of men, passions that they can no longer be able to reftrain. The great art of the moral philosopher would be to shew to men, and to those who regulate their wills, that their n erefts are the fame, that their reciprocal happiness depends upon the harmony of their VOL. II. passions passions, and that the safety, the power, and the duration of empires, necessarily depend upon the fense that they diffuse in the notions, the virtues that they fow, and that they cultivate, in the hearts of the citizens. Religion should not be admissable, unless it truly fortified and ftrengthened these motives, and unless it were possible that falsehood could be able to lend real affiffance to truth. But in the miferable state into which univerfal error has plunged the human species; men, for the most part, are obliged to be wicked or to injure their fellow creatures, all the motives with which they are furnished, invite them to commit evil. Religion renders them useless, abject and trembling, or elfe it makes them fanatics, who are cruel, inhuman, and intolerant. The supreme Power crushes them, and obliges them to be cringing and vicious. The law never punishes crimes, but when it is too feeble, and is not able to restrain the excesses that the government has given birth to. short, education neglected and despised depends depends either on priefts who are impostors, or upon parents without understanding, and without manners, who transmit to their scholars those vices with which they are themselves tormented, and the salse opinions that they have an interest in making them adopt.

All this proves to us then, the necessity of recurring to the primitive fources of the wanderings and miftakes of men, if we are willing to carry them fuitable remedies. It is useless to dream of correcting them, fo long as we shall not have unravelled the true causes that move their wills, and fo long as to the inefficacious and dangerous motive-powers that have been always employed, they shall not fubstitute motive-powers, more real, more ufeful, and more certain. It is for those who are the masters of the human will, it is for those who regulate the condition of nations, to feek after those motivepowers which reason will furnish them with; a good book in touching the heart of a great prince, may be able to become a very powerful cause, that shall necessarily have an influence over the conduct of a whole people, and upon the felicity of a portion of the human species.

From all that has been faid in this chapter, it refults that man is not free in any one instant of his existence. He is not mafter of his conformation which he holds from Nature; he is not master of his ideas, or of the modifications of his brain, which are due to causes, that in despite of him, and without his knowledge, act continually upon him; he is not mafter of not loving or defiring that which he finds amiable and defirable; he is not master of not deliberating when he is uncertain of the effects that the objects will produce upon him; he is not mafter of not choosing that which he believes will be the most advantageous; he is not master of acting otherwise than he does in the moment when his will is determined by his choice. In what moment then is man the master of, or free in, his actions?*

* Here then is the manner in which they can be able to reduce the question of the liberty of man. Liberty cannot be able to relate itself to any one of the known functions of

That which a man goes to do, is always a confequence of that which he has been,

our Soul; for the Soul, in the moment in which it acts, cannot be able to act otherwise; in the moment in which it deliberates, it cannot be able to deliberate otherwise: in the moment in which it makes a choice, it cannot be able to choose otherwise; in the moment in which it wills, it cannot be able to will otherwise, because a thing cannot be able to exist, and not to exist, at the fame time. Now, it is my will, fuch as it is, that makes me deliberate; it is my deliberation, fuch as it is, that makes me choose; it is my choice, such as it is, that makes me act; it is my determination, fuch as it is, that makes me execute that which my deliberation has made me choose, and I have only deliberated, because I have had motives that have made me deliberate, and because it was not possible that I should not be willing to deliberate. Thus liberty is not found neither in the will, nor in the deliberation, nor in the choice, nor in the action. The Theologians must not relate liberty to any one of these operations of the Soul, for otherwife, there would be a contradiction in the ideas. If the Soul is not free, neither when it wills, nor when it deliberates, nor when it chooses, nor when it acts, when can it be able then to exercise its liberty? It is for the Theologians to tell us.

It is evident, that it is to justify the Divinity from the evil that is committed in this world, that they have imagined the fystem of liberty, nevertheless this system does in no manner justify it. Indeed, if it is from God

of that which he is, of that which he has done to the moment of the action. Our total and actual Being, confidered in all its possible circumstances, contains the sum of all the motives of the action that we are going to do; a principle, the truth of which no thinking being can be able to refuse acknowledging. Our life is a feries of necessary moments, and our conduct, good or bad, virtuous or vicious, ufeful or prejudicial to ourselves or to others, is a concatenation of actions as necessary as all the moments of our existence. LIVE, is to exist in a necessary mode, during the points of the duration that fucceed each other necessarily; To WILL, is to acquiesce, or not to acquiesce in remaining fuch as we are; TO BE FREE, is to yield to the necessary motives that we carry within ourfelves.

that man has received his liberty, it is from God that he has received the faculty of choosing the evil, and of putting from him the good; thus it is from God that he has received the determination to sin, or else liberty must be essential to man, and independent of God. See the TREATISE OF SYSTEMS, PAGE 124.

If

If we knew the play of our organs, if we could be able to recal to ourselves all the impulsions or modifications that they have received, and the effects that they have produced, we should see that all our actions are submitted to the fatality, that regulates our particular fystem, like the entire fystem of the universe; no one effect in us, as in Nature, produces itself by CHANCE, which, as we have proved, is a word void of fense. All that which passes in us, or that which is done by us, as well as all that happens in Nature, or that we attribute to it, is due to necessary causes, which act according to necessary laws, and which produce neceffary effects, from whence others.

FATALITY, is the eternal, immutable, necessary order, established in Nature, or the indispensible connexion of causes that act with the essects that they operate. After this order, heavy bodies fall, light bodies elevate themselves, analogous matter attract each other, contrary matter repel each other; men place themselves

in fociety, modify each other, become good or wicked, render themselves mutually happy or miferable, love each other, or hate each other necessarily after the manner in which they act the one upon the other. From whence they fee, that the necessity that regulates the motion of the physical world, regulates also all those of the moral world, where every thing is in confequence fubmitted to fatality. In running over without our knowledge, and frequently in defpite of ourselves, the route that Nature has marked out for us, we refemble fwimmers that are obliged to follow the current that carries them away; we believe ourfelves to be free, because sometimes we confent, fometimes we do not confent to follow the stream that always carries us along; we believe ourselves the masters of our condition, because we are obliged to move our arms in the fear of finking.

Volentem ducunt fata, nolentem trahunt.

SENEC:

The false ideas that they have formed to themselves upon liberty, are in general founded

founded upon this, that there are events which we judge necessary, because we see that they are effects that are constantly and invariably linked to certain causes, without any thing being able to prevent them, or because we believe, we discover the chain of causes and effects which concur to produce these events, whilst we regard, as contin-GENT, those events of which we are ignorant of the causes, the concatenation, and the mode of acting; but in a Nature where every thing is connected, there exists no effect without a cause; and in the physical world, as well as in the moral world, every thing that happens, is a necessary confequence of causes, visible or concealed, which are obliged to act after their peculiar effences. In man, liberty is only necessity contained within himfelf.



Vol. II. I

CHAPTER

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE OPINION THAT PRETENDS THAT THE SYSTEM OF FATALISM IS DANGEROUS.

FOR beings who are obliged by their effence to tend conftantly to conferve themselves, and to render themselves happy, experience is indifpenfible; they cannot be able without it to discover the truth, which is, as we have faid, only a knowledge of the constant relations that fubfist between man and the objects that act upon him; according to our experience, we denominate those useful, that obtain for us a permanent well-being, and we call those agreeable that procure us a pleasure, more or less durable. Truth itself becomes the object of our defires, only because we believe it useful; we dread it, as foon as we prefume that it can be able

able to injure us. But can truth really be able to injure? Is it then possible that evil can be able to refult to man from an exact knowledge of the relations, or of the things of which for his happiness he is interested in having a knowledge? No, without doubt; it is upon its utility that truth founds its worth and its rights; it may fometimes be able to be difagreeable to fome individuals and contrary to their interests; but it will ever be ufeful to the whole human species, of whom the interests are never the same as those of the men, who, the dupes of their peculiar passions, believe themselves interested in plunging others into error. Utility then is the touch-stone of the fystems, the opinions and the actions of men; it is the standard of the esteem, and of the love that we owe to truth itself: the most useful truths are the most estimable: we call eminent those truths that are most interesting for the human species; those that we call sterile, or that we disdain, are those of which the utility limit themfelves to the amufement of fome men,

who have not ideas, modes of feeling, wants analogous to our own.

It is according to this standard, that the principles, which shall be established in this work, ought to be judged. who shall know the immense chain of mischief, that the erroneous systems of fuperstition have produced on the earth, will acknowledge the importance of opposing to them systems more true, drawn from Nature, founded upon experience. Those who are, or who believe themselves interested in supporting the established falsehoods, will regard with horror the truths that we prefent to them. In short, those who shall not feel, or who shall only feel very feebly the miferies, caused by theological prejudices, will regard all our principles as ufelefs, or as fterile truths, formed at most to amuse the idleness of fome speculators.

Do not let us then be at all astonished at the different judgments that we see formed by men; their interests never being the same, any more than their notions of utility; they condemn or dif-

dain

dain every thing that does not accord itself with their peculiar ideas. This granted, let us examine if in the eves of the man difinterested, disentangled from prejudices, or fensible to the happinefs of his species, the doctrine of fatalifm is ufeful or dangerous. Let us fee if it is a barren speculation and that has no one influence upon the felicity of the human species. We have already seen that it must furnish to morals and politics true and real motive-powers to give action to the wills of men? we have likewife feen, that it ferved to explain in a simple manner, the mechanism of the actions, and the most striking phanomena of the human heart. On the other hand, if our ideas are only sterile speculations, they cannot be able to interest the happiness of the human species; whether he believes himfelf free, whether he acknowledges the necessity of things, he always follows equally the defires imprinted on his Soul. A rational education, honest habits, wife fyftems, equitable laws, rewards and punishments, justly distributed, will render man good, and not thorny fpeculations filled with difficulties, that can at most be able to have an in uence only upon persons accustomed to think.

After these reflexions, it will be very easy for us to remove the difficulties that they are unceasingly opposing to the system of fatalism; which so many people, blinded by their religious prejudices, would be willing to have regarded as dangerous, as deserving of punishment, as calculated to disturb the public tranquillity, to unchain the passions, to confound the ideas that men ought to have of vice and of virtue.

They tell us indeed, that if all the actions of men are necessary, they have no right whatever to punish those who commit bad ones, nor even to be angry with them; that they cannot be able to impute any thing to them; that the laws would be unjust, if they should decree punishments against them; in a word, that in this case, man could neither have merit or demerit. I reply, that to impute an action to any one is, to attri-

bute

bute it to him, it is to acknowledge him for the author; thus, when even they should suppose that this action was the effect of an agent NECESSITY, the imputation can be able to take place. The merit or the demerit that we afcribe to an action, are ideas founded upon the effects, favorable or pernicious, that refult to those who experience it; and when they should grant that the agent was necessity, it is not less certain that his action will be good or bad, estimable or contemptible to those who shall feel its influence, in short, that it will be capable of exciting their love or their anger. Love or anger are in us, modes of being fuitable to modify the beings of our species; when I irritate myself against any one, I pretend to excite in him fear, and to deter him from that which difpleafes me, or even to punish him. Beside, my anger is neceffary, it is the refult of my Nature, and of my temperament. The painful fenfation that is produced in me, by a stone that falls upon my arm, is not a fensation that displeases me less, although

it comes from a cause deprived of will, and which acts by the necessity of its Nature. In viewing men as acting necessarily, we cannot be able to exempt ourselves from distinguishing in them a mode of being and of acting, that is agreeable to us, or which we are obliged to approve, from a mode of being and of acting that afflicts us and irritates us, which our Nature obliges us to blame and to prevent. From whence we see, that the system of satalism does not, in any manner, change the state of things, and is by no means suitable to consound the ideas of vice and of virtue*.

The laws are only made to maintain

* Our Nature always revolts against that which opposes itself to it; there are men so choleric, that they infuriate themselves even against insensible and inanimate objects. But the reflexion of the impotence of ourselves to modify them, ought to conduct us back to reason. Parents are frequently very much to be blamed, for correcting their children with anger, they are beings that are not yet modified, or that have been very badly modified by themselves. Nothing is more common in life, than to see men punish faults, of which they are themselves the causes.

fociety.

fociety, and to prevent men affociated, from injuring each other; they can then be able to punish those who disturb it, or who commit actions that are injurious to their fellow creatures; whether these affociates may be agents of necessity, or whether they act freely, it suffices for them to know, that these agents are capable of modification. The penal laws are those motives that experience has shewn to us, as capable of restraining, or of annihilating the impulsions that the passions give to the wills of men; from whatever necessary cause they may receive these paffions, the legislator proposes to himfelf, to arrest their effects; and when he takes a fuitable and proper method, he is fure of fuccess. In decreeing gibbets, tortures, or any chastisement whatever to crimes, he does nothing more than is done by him, who in building a house, places gutters to prevent the rain water from beating down the foundation of his dwelling.

Whatever may be the cause that makes men act, we have the right to arrest the Vol. II. K effects

effects of their actions, the same as the man, whose lands may be ruined by a river, has a right to restrain its waters by a bank, or even if he is able, to turn its course. It is by virtue of this right, that society can be able to intimidate and punish, with a view to its conservation, those who might be tempted to injure it, or who commit actions that they acknowledge to be truly prejudicial to its repose, to its security, to its happiness.

They will tell us, without doubt, that fociety does not ordinarily punish those faults, in which the will has no part: it is this will alone that they punish; and that it is this which decides on the crime and of its atrocity, and that if this will is not free, they ought not to punish it. I reply, that society is an assemblage of sensible beings, susceptible of reason, who desire their well-being, and who fear evil. These dispositions enable their wills to be so modified or determined, as to be able to make them hold such a conduct, as shall conduct them to their end. Education, the laws, public opi-

nion, example, habit, fear, are the causes that must modify men, influence their will, make them concur to the general happiness, regulate their passions, and restrain those which can be able to injure the end of affociation. These causes are of a nature to make impressions upon all men, whose organization and whose essence, place them in a capacity to contract the habits, the modes of thinking and acting that with which they are willing to infpire them. All the beings of our species, are sufceptible of fear, from thence the fear of punishment, or the privation of the happiness that they desire, is a motive that must necessarily influence, more or less, their wills and their actions. If there are to be found men fo badly constituted as to relift, or to be infensible to the motives that act upon all the others, they are not fit to live in fociety, they would contradict the end of affociation, they would be its enemies, they would place obstacles to its tendency, and their rebellious and unfociable wills, not being able to be modified conveniently to the interests of their fellow citizens, these would unite themselves against their enemies, and the law, which is the expression of the general will, would inslict punishments on these beings, upon whom the motives, that they have presented to them, have not had the effects that they had been induced to expect. In consequence, these unsociable men are punished, are rendered miserable, and according to the nature of their crimes, are excluded from society, as beings but little calculated to concur in its views.

If fociety has the right to conferve it felf, it has also the right to take the means; these means are the laws, which present to the wills of men, those motives that are most fuitable to deter them from committing injurious actions: these motives, can they not have any effect upon them? Society, for its peculiar good, is obliged to take from them the power of injuring it. From whatever source their actions may arise, whether they may be free, whether they may be necessary, it punishes them, when after having presented them with motives

motives fufficiently, powerful to act upon reasonable beings, it sees that these motives have not been able to vanquish the impulsions of their depraved Nature. It punishes them with justice, when the actions from which it diffuades them, are truly injurious to fociety; it has the right to punish them, when it only commands them to do, or defends them from committing those things, that are conformable or contrary to the Nature of beings, affociated for their reciprocal advantage. But on the other hand, the law has not the right to punish those to whom it has not prefented the necessary motives to have an influence on their wills; it has not the right to punish those, whom the negligence of fociety has deprived of the means of fubfifting, of exercifing their industry and their talents, of labouring for it. It is unjust, when it punishes those to whom it has neither given education, nor honest principles, whom it has not caused to contract habits necessary to the maintenance of fociety. It is unjust, when it punishes them for faults, that the wants of their Nature, and which the constitution of society, has rendered necessary to them. It is unjust and irrational, whenever it chastises them for having followed those propensities, which society itself, which example, which public opinion, which the institutions, conspire to give them. In short, the law is iniquitous, when it does not proportion the punishment to the real evil that they have done to society. The last degree of injustice and of folly is, when it is so blinded, as to instict punishment on those who have served it usefully.

Thus the penal laws, in shewing fright-ful objects to men, whom they must suppose susceptible of fear, present them with motives, suitable to have an influence on their wills. The idea of pain, the privation of their liberty, of death, are for beings well constituted, and in the enjoyment of their faculties, very puissant obstacles that strongly oppose themselves to the impulsions of their unruly desires; those who are not stopped by them, are irrational beings, madmen, beings badly

badly organized, against whom the others have a right to guarantee themselves, and place themselves in fecurity. Madness is, without doubt, an involuntary and necessary state, nevertheless no one finds it unjust to deprive fools of their liberty, although their actions can only be imputed to the derangement of their brain. The wicked are men of whom the brain, is either perpetually or transitorily difturbed, we must then punish them by reason of the evil that they commit, and place them for ever in the impossibility of injuring it, if we have no hopes of ever bringing them back to a conduct conformable to the end of fociety.

I shall not examine here, how far the punishments that fociety inflicts on those who offend against it, may be able to be carried. Reason appears to indicate, that the law ought to shew, to the necessary crimes of men, all the indulgence that is compatible with the confervation of fociety. The fystem of fatalism does not leave, as we have feen, crimes unpunished, but it is at least fuitable to moderate the

barbarity

barbarity with which a great number of nations punish the victims of their anger. This cruelty becomes yet more abfurd, when experience shews the inutility of it; the habit of feeing atrocious punishments, familiarizes criminals with their If it is true, that fociety has the right of taking away the life of its members; if it is really true, that the death of a criminal, thenceforth useless to it. can be advantageous to fociety, which it will be necessary to examine; humanity at least exacts that this death should not be accompanied with useless tortures, with which frequently the too rigorous, laws, please themselves with overloading This cruelty ferves only to make the victim, that is immolated to the public vengeance, fuffer without any advantage to itself; it moves the compassion of the fpectator, and interests him in favor of the unhappy fufferer who groans under it; it impofes nothing upon the wicked, but the fight of the cruelties that are destined for him, and frequently renders him more ferocious, more cruel, more the enemy of his

his affociates. If the example of death was less frequent, even without being accompanied with pains, it would be more important.*

What shall we say to the unjust cruelty of some nations, where the laws that ought to be made for the advantage of the whole, appear only to have for object the particular security of the most powerful, and where punishments the most

* The greater number of criminals, only look upon death as a bad quarter of an hour. A thief feeing one of his comrades, who shewed but little firmness, in the middle of the punishment said to him, is not this what I told you, that in our business, we had one evil more than the rest of mankind? They rob every day, even at the foot of the scaffolds, where they punish the criminals. In those nations, where they inflict so lightly the penalty of death, have they paid attention, that fociety is yearly deprived of a great number of men, who would be able, by being made to work, to render it very useful services, and thus indemnify it for the injury they have done it? The facility with which they take away the lives of men, proves the tyranny, and the incapacity of the greater part of the legislators; they find it much shorter to destroy the citizens, than to feek after the means of rendering them better.

Vol. II. L

dif-

disproportionate to the crimes, unmercifully take away the lives of men, whom the most urgent necessity have obliged to become criminal? It is thus, that in the greater number of civilized nations, the life of a citizen is placed in the same scales as money; the miserable wretch, who is perishing with hunger and misery, is put to death for having taken a pitiful portion of the superfluity of another, whom he sees rolling in abundance! It is this, that in enlightened societies, they call JUSTICE, or proportioning the punishment to the crime.

This dreadful iniquity, does it not become more crying yet, when the laws and the cuftoms decree the most cruel pains against crimes, which the bad institutions engender and multiply? Men, as we cannot too often repeat, are so prone to evil, only because every thing appears to push them on to the commission of it. Their education is void in the greater number of states, man receives from the people no other principles, than those of an unintelligible religion, which is but a very feeble barrier

barrier against the propensities of his heart. In vain, the law cries out to him to abstain himself from the goods of his neighbour; his wants cry out to him more powerfully, that he must live at the expence of the fociety, who have done nothing for him, and who condemn him to groan in indigence and in mifery; deprived frequently of necessaries, he revenges himself by thefts, by robberies, by affaffinations; at the rifque of his life he feeks to fatisfy either those real, or imaginary wants, which every thing conspires to excite in his heart: deprived of education he has not been taught to restrain the fury of his temperament; without ideas of decency, without any principles of honor, he engages himself to injure a country, which is only a ftepmother to him; in his transports he does not even fee the gibbets that attend him; befide, his defires have become too powerful, he can no longer be able to change his inveterate habits, laziness benumbs him, despair blinds him, he rushes on to death, and fociety punishes, with rigour, those L, 2

those fatal and necessary dispositions that it has given birth to in him, or at least, which it has not seasonably rooted out, and combatted by the most suitable motives to give honest inclinations to his heart. Thus society frequently punishes those propensities to which society itself has given birth, or which its negligence has caused to spring up in our minds; it acts like those unjust fathers who chastise their children for those vices, which they have themselves made them contract.

However unjust and unreasonable this conduct may be, or may appear to be, it is not less necessary. Society, such as it is, whatever may be its corruption and the vices of its institutions, is willing to subsist, and tends to conserve itself; in consequence, it is obliged to punish those excesses, which its bad constitution has forced it to produce: in despite of its peculiar prejudices and of its vices, it feels that its security demands that it should destroy the conspiracies of those, who declare war against it; if these drawn along by their necessary propensities disturb it and injure

it; obliged on its part, by the defire of conferving itself, it removes them out of its road, and punishes them with more or less rigour, according to the objects to which it attaches the greatest importance, or which it supposes to be most useful to its peculiar well-being: it deceives itself, without doubt, frequently upon these objects, and upon the means, but it deceives itself then necessarily, for want of having the knowledge that could be able to enlighten it upon its true interests, or for want of vigilance, of talents, and of virtue in those who regulate its movements. From whence we fee, that the injuffice of a fociety, blinded and badly constituted, is as necessary as the crimes of those that diffurb it and diffract it*. A body politic, when it is in a state of madness, cannot be able to act more conformably to reason,

^{*}A fociety that punishes those excesses to which it has itself given birth, may be compared to those, who are attacked with the Lousy disorder: they are obliged to kill the insects, with which they are tormented, although it is their vicious constitution that produces them at each instant.

than one of its members, whose brain is troubled.

They tell us again, that these maxims, in fubmitting every thing to necessity, must confound, or even deftroy the notions that we have of justice, and of injustice, of good, and of evil, of merit, and of demerit. I deny it; although man acts necessarily in every thing that he does, his actions are good, just, and meritorious, every time that they tend to the real utility of his fellow men, and of the fociety in which he lives: and we cannot be able to prevent ourfelves from diftinguishing them from those that are really prejudicial to the well-being of his affociates. Society is just, good worthy of our love, when it procures to all its members their physical wants, fecurity, LIBERTY, the possession of their NATURAL RIGHTS; it is in this that confifts all the happiness of which the social compact is fusceptible; it is unjust, bad, unworthy of our love, when it is partial to a finall number, and cruel to the greater part; it is then that it necessarily multiplies its enemies, and obliges them to revenge themselves

themselves by criminal actions that it is forced to punish. It is not upon the caprices of a political fociety, that depend the true notions of justice and of injustice, of moral good and evil, of real merit and demerit; it is upon the utility, it is upon the necessity of things, that will always oblige men to feel, that there exists a mode of acting, that they are obliged to venerate, and to approve in their fellow men, or in fociety, whilft there is another mode, that they are obligated, by their Nature, to hate and to condemn. It is upon our peculiar effence that are founded our ideas of pleafure, and of pain, of justice and of injustice, of vice and of virtue; the only difference is, that pleafure and pain make themselves immediately and upon the fpot; felt in our brain, in the room of which the advantages of justice and of virtue, frequently do not shew themselves to us, but by a train of reflections, and multiplied and complicated experience, which the defect of their conformation, and of their circumstances, frequently prevent many men from

from making, or at least from making with exactitude.

By a necessary consequence of this truth, the fystem of fatalism does not tend to encourage us in crime, and to make remorfe difappear, as they have frequently accused it with doing. Our propensities are ascribable to our Nature; the use that we make of our passions, depend upon our habits, upon our opinions, upon the ideas that we have received in our education, and in the fociety in which we live. They are necessarily these things, that decide upon our condust. Thus when our temperament renders us fusceptible of strong passions, we are violent in our defires, whatever may our speculations. Remorfe is the painful fentiments excited in us by the grief that is caused by the present or future effect of our passions; if these effects are always useful to us, we have no remorfe; but as foon as we are affured that our actions render us hateful or contemptible to others, or as foon as we fear we thall be punished in one mode or another,

4

we are unquiet and discontented with ourfelves, we reproach ourfelves with our conduct, we are ashamed at the bottom of our heart, we fear the judgment of beings, in the esteem, the good will, and the affection of whom we have learnt, and we feel that we are interested. Our own peculiar experience proves to us, that the wicked is an odious man to all these upon whom his actions have an influence; if thefe actions are concealed, we know that it very rarely happens, that they can be able to remain fo for ever. The fmallest reflection proves to us, that there is no wicked man, that is not ashamed of his conduct, who is truly contented with himself, who does not envy the condition of the good man, who is not obliged to acknowledge, that he has paid very dearly for those advantages that he is never able to enjoy, without making the most troublefome reflections and reproaches upon himfelf. He experiences shame, he despises himself, he hates himself, his conscience is always alarmed. To convince ourselves of this principle, we must VOL. II. M

consider to what length tyrants and villains, who are fufficiently powerful, not to fear the punishment of men, fearing however the truth, push their precautions and their cruelties against those who could be able to expose them to the judgment of the public. They have then the confciousness of their iniquities? They know then, that they are hateful and contemptible? They have then remorfe? Their condition is not then happy? Perfons well brought up, acquire these sentiments in their education; they are strengthened or enfeebled, by the public opinion, by custom, by the examples that they have before their eyes. In a depraved fociety, remorfe either does not exist, or they presently disappear; for in all their actions, it is always the judgments of their fellow men, that men are obliged to regard. We have never, neither shame, nor remorfe for actions that we fee approved or practifed by all the world. Under a corrupted government, fouls venal, avaricious and mercenary, do not blush at meanness, at robbery and rapine, that nation, no one blushes at adultery; in a superstitious country, they do not blush to affassinate each other for opinions. We see then, that our remorfe, as well as the ideas, true or false, which we have of decency, of virtue, of justice, &c. are the necessary consequence of our temperament, modified by the society in which we live; affassins and thieves, when they live amongst themselves, have neither shame nor remorfe.

Thus, I repeat, all the actions of men are necessary; those which are always useful, or which contribute to the real and permanent happiness of our species, are called virtues, and are necessarily pleasing to all those who experience their influence, at least if their passions, or their salse opinions, do not oblige them to judge of them in a manner but little suitable to the nature of things. Each acts and judges necessarily according to his peculiar mode of being, and after the ideas, true or false, that he has formed to himself of happiness. There are necessary actions to which we

M 2

are obliged to give our approbation; there are others that we are, in despite of ourfelves, forced to cenfure, and of which the idea obliges us to be ashamed, when our imagination permits us to contemplate them under the fame point of view that they are confidered by others. The good man, and the wicked man act by motives equally necessary; they differ simply in their organization, and in the ideas that they form to themselves of happiness; we love one neceffarily, and we detest the other by the fame necessity. The law of our nature, which wills that a fenfible being should labour constantly to conserve itself, has not left to men the power of choosing, or the liberty of preferring pain to pleasure, vice to utility, crime to virtue. It is then the effence itself of man that obliges him to diftinguish those actions that are advantageous to himfelf, from those which are prejudicial and injurious to him.

This diffinction fubfifts even in those societies that are most corrupted, where the ideas of virtue, although completely effaced from their conduct, remain the same in their minds. Indeed let us suppose a man decidedly for villainy, who should fay to himself that it is a folly to be virtuous in a fociety that is debauched and depraved. Let us suppose also that he has fufficient address and good fortune to efcape, during a long feries of years, cenfure and punishment; I fay that, in despite of all these circumstances so advantageous, fuch a man has not been neither happy, nor contented with himself. He has been in agonies, at war with himfelf, in perpetual agitations. How many precautions, How many embarrafsments, how much labour, how many cares and folicitudes has he not been obligated to employ in this continual struggle, and wrestling against his affociates, whose penetration into his conduct he fears! Demand of him what he thinks of himfelf? Let us approach ourfelves to the bedfide of this villain when dying, and let us ask him if he would be willing to recommence, at the fame price, a life of fimilar agitation? If he is ingenuous, he will avow that he has neither tailed of repose or of happiness, that each crime crime has cost him inquietudes, and prevented him from sleeping; that this world, has been for him only a continued scene of alarm, fright, and anxiety of mind; that to live peaceably upon bread and water, appeared to him to be a much happier and easy condition, than to acquire riches, credit, reputation, honours, on the same conditions that he has acquired them. If this villain maugre all his success, finds his condition deplorable, what shall we think of those who have had neither the same resources, nor the same advantages to succeed in their projects?

Thus the fystem of necessity is not only true, and sounded upon certain experience, but again it establishes morals upon an immoveable basis. Far from sapping the foundations of virtue, it points out the necessity of it; it shews clearly the invariable fentiments that it must excite in us, sentiments so necessary, and so strong, that all the prejudices and all the vices of our institutions have not been able ever to annihilate them entirely in our hearts. When we mistake the advantages of virtue, it is to the

errors

errors that are infused in us, to our irrational inflitutions that we ought to afcribe it; all our wanderings are the fatal and necessary consequences of errors and of prejudices, that have identified themselves with us. Do not let us then any longer impute it to our Nature, that we have become wicked; they are the fatal opinions that we have been forced to imbibe with our mother's milk that render us ambitious, avaricious, envious, haughty, arrogant, debauched, intolerant, obstinate in our prejudices, incommodious to our fellow men, and prejudicial to ourselves. It is education that carries into us the germ of vices that torment us necessarily.

They reproach fatalism with discouraging men, with damping the fire of their souls, with plunging them in apathy, of breaking the bonds that should connect them to society. If every thing is necessary, say they to us, we must let things go on, and not be troubled at any thing. But does it depend upon me to be sensible or not? Am I the master of seeling or of not seeling pain? It

during the whole course of our lives.

Namure

Nature has given me a foul, humane and tender, is it possible for me not to interest myfelf, in a very lively manner, in the beings that I know to be necessary to my own peculiar happiness? My feelings are necessary, they depend on my peculiar nature, which education has cultivated. My imagination prompt to concern itself, causes my heart to be oppressed, and to tremble at the fight of those evils that my fellow men endure, of the despotism that crushes them, of the fuperstition that leads them astray, of the passions that destract them, of the follies that are perpetually placing them in a ftate of warfare. Although I know that death is the fatal and necessary period of all the beings, * my foul is not affected in a less lively manner, at the loss of a beloved wife, of a child calculated to confole me in my old age, of a friend become necessary to my heart. Although I am not

* Death is not the period of a being or of the existance of matter, but merely the period of its particular form. Death is only the passage from a mode of existence under one form, into a mode of existence under another form. Matter being eternal must always exist.

ignorant

ignorant that it is the effence of fire to burn, I do not believe myfelf dispensed from using my utmost efforts to arrest the progress of a conflagration. Although I am intimately convinced that the evils, of which I am a witness, are the necessary confequences of the primitive errors, with which my fellow citizens are imbued; if Nature has given me the courage to do it, I ought to shew them the truth; if they listen to it, it will, by degrees, become the certain remedy of their sufferings; it will produce those effects which it is its effence to operate.

If the speculations of men did influence their conduct, or did change their temperaments, they could not be able to doubt that the system of necessity ought to have the most advantageous influence upon them; not only it would be suitable to calm the greater part of their inquietudes; but it would also contribute to inspire them with a useful submission, a rational resignation to the decrees of a destiny, with which their too great sensibility frequently causes them to be overwhelmed. This happy apathy Vol. II.

would, without doubt, be defirable for those beings that a too tender soul frequently renders the deplorable sport of destiny, or that too weak organs expose incessantly to be beaten in pieces by the blows of adversity.

But of all the advantages that the human species would be able to draw from the doctrine of fatalism; if man was to apply it to his conduct, there is none greater than that indulgence, that universal tolerance, that must be the result of the opinion that ALL IS NECESSARY. In confequence of this principle the fatalist, if he had a fenfible foul, would commiferate his fellow men, would lament over their wanderings, would feek to undeceive them, without ever irritating himfelf against them, or infulting their mifery. Indeed what right have we to hate or despise men? Their ignorance, their prejudices, their imbecility, their vices, their passions, their weakness, are they not the inevitable confequences of their bad institutions? Are they not fufficiently punished by a multitude of evils that afflict them on all fides ?

fides? The despots who overwhelm them with an iron fceptre, are they not the continual victims of their own peculiar restlessness, and of their distidence and suspicions? Is their one wicked man who enjoys a pure and real happiness? Do not nations unceafingly fuffer from their prejudices and their follies? The ignorance of the chiefs, and the hatred they have for reason and truth, is it not punished by the weakness and the ruin of the states they govern? In a word, the fatalist will lament to fee necessity exercise, at each moment, its fevere decrees, upon the mortals who are ignorant of its power, or who feel its blows without being willing to acknowledge the hand from whence they proceed; he will fee that ignorance is neceffary; that credulity is the neceffary refult of ignorance; that flavery and bondage is a necessary consequence of ignorant credulity; that the corruption of manners is the necessary consequence of slavery; in short, that the miseries of society, and of its members, are the necessary confequence of this corruption.

N 2

The

The fatalist, in consequence of these ideas will neither be then an incommodious misantrope, nor a dangerous citizen. He will pardon his brethren those wanderings and errors which their vitiated Nature, by a thousand causes, have rendered necessary to them; he will console them, he will inspire them with courage, he will undeceive them of their vain chimeras: but he will never shew them that bitterness, that animosity, more suitable to make them revolt from, than to attract them to reason. He will not disturb the repose of society, he will not raise the people to infurrection against the sovereign authority; he will feel that the perverfeness and blindness of so many conductors of the people, are the necessary consequence of that flattery with which they feed them in their infancy, of the necessary malice of those who beset them and corrupt them, that they may profit by their folly and weakness; in short, that these are the inevitable effects of the profound ignorance, of their true interests, in which every thing strives to keep them.

The fatalist has no right to be vain of his peculiar talents or of his virtues; he knows that these qualities are only the confequences of his natural organization, modified by circumstances that have in no wise depended upon himself. He will neither have hatred nor contempt for those whom nature and circumstances have not favoured in a similar manner to himself. It is the fatalist that ought to be humble and modest from principle; is he not obliged to acknowledge that he possesses nothing that he has not received?

In thort, every thing will conduct to indulgence, him whom experience has convinced of the necessity of things. He will see, with pain, that it is the essence of a society, badly constituted, badly governed, enslaved to prejudices, and to unreasonable customs, submitted to irrational laws, desgraded by despotism, corrupted by luxury, inebriated with salse opinions, to be silled with vicious and trisling citizens; with slaves eringing, and proud of their chains; with ambitious men, without ideas of true glory, with misers and prodigals, with fanatics

natics and libertines. Convinced of the necessary connexion of things, he will not be surprised to see, that their supineness, or influence, carry discouragement into their countries, that bloody wars depopulate them, that useless expenditures impoverish them, and that all these excesses united is the reason why nations contain every where only men without happiness, without understanding, without morals, and without virtue. He will only fee, in all this, the necessary action, and re-action, of physics upon morals, and of morals upon physics. In short, all men, who acknowledge fatality, will remain perfuaded that a nation badly governed, is a foil very fruitful in venemous and poisonous plants; that they grow in it in fuch abundance as to crowd themselves, and choak the one the other. It is in a country, cultivated by the hands of a Lycurgus, that he will fee produced citizens intrepid, noble, difinterested, strangers to pleasures; in a country cultivated by a TIBERIUS, we shall only find villains, with mean and contemptible fouls, informers and traitors. It is the foil, it is the circumstances in which men find themselves placed, that make them objects useful or prejudicial: the wife man avoids the one as he would those dangerous reptiles, of whom it is the Nature to bite, and to communicate their venom; he attaches himself to the others, and loves them like those delicious fruits, with which he finds his palate agreeably flattered: he fees the wicked without anger, he cherishes the good and bountiful hearts; he knows that the tree that is languishing without culture, in the dry and fandy defert that has rendered it deformed and crooked, would perhaps have extended its folliage far and wide, would have furnished delectable fruits, would have afforded a cool shelter, if its feed had been placed in a more fertile foil, or if it had experienced the attentive cares of an able cultivator.

Let them not then tell us that it is degrading man to reduce his functions to a pure mechanism; that it is shamefully to undervalue him, to abase him, to compare him to a tree, to an abject vegetation.

The

The philosopher, devoid of prejudices, does not understand this language, invented by the ignorance of that which truly conftitutes the dignity of man. A tree is an object which, in its station, joins the useful with the agreeable; it merits our affection when it produces fweet and pleafant fruits, and a favourable shade. All machines are precious, whenever they are truly useful, and faithfully fulfil the functions for which they are destined. Yes, I fpeak it with courage, the honest man, when he has talents and virtue, is, for the beings of his species, a tree that furnishes them and with fruits and with shelter. The honest man is a machine of which the fprings are adapted to fulfil its functions in a manner that must please. No, I should not blush to be a machine of this fort, and my heart would leap with joy if it could foresee that the fruits of my reflections would one day be useful and confoling to my fellow men.

Nature, herself, is she not a vast machine of which our species is but a very weak spring? I see nothing that is contempti-

ble, neither in her, nor in her productions; all the beings that come out of her hands, are good, noble, fublime, as foon as they co-operate to the production of order and of harmony in the fphere where they must act. Of whatever nature may be the Soul, whether they make it mortal, whether they suppose it immortal, whether they regard it as a spirit, whether they look upon it as a portion of the body, I shall find this foul noble, great, sublime, in socrates, ARISTIDES, and CATO. I shall call it a foul of corruption in CLAU-DIUS, in SEJANUS, in NERO. I shall admire its energy, and its manner in cor-NEILLE, in NEWTON, in MONTESQUIEU: I shall lament its baseness, in seeing contemptible men, who flatter tyranny, or who fervilely cringe, at the feet of superstition.

Every thing that is faid in the course of this work proves clearly to us that every thing is necessary. Every thing is always in order relative to Nature, where all the beings do no more than follow the laws that are imposed on them. It is part of Vol. II.

her plan that certain portions of the earth should produce delicious fruits, whilst others should only furnish brambles, dangerous vegetables. She has been willing that fome focieties should produce men wife, heroes, great; fhe has regulated that others should only give birth to men abject, without energy, and without virtue. Organs, winds, tempests, diseases, wars, plagues and death, are as necessary to her march as the beneficent heat of the fun, as the ferenity of the air, as the gentle showers of spring, as plentiful years, as health, as peace, as life; vice and virtue, darknefs and light, ignorance and fcience, are equally necessary; the one are not benefits, the others are not evils, but for particular beings, of whom they favor or derange the mode of existence. The whole cannot be miferable, but it can be able to contain unhappy beings.

Nature then distributes, with the same hand, that which we call ORDER, and that which we call PLEASURE, and that which we call PAIN; in short, she disfuses, by the ne-

ceffity

cessity of her being, and the good and the evil in the world which we inhabit. Do not let us for this tax her with bounty or with malice; do not let us imagine that by our cries and our prayers we can be able to arrest her power, always acting after immutable laws. Let us fubmit to our condition, and when we fuffer, do not let us recur to chimeras that our imaginations have created; let us draw from Nature herfelf, the remedies that the offers us for the evil that she does us. If she fends us difeases, let us fearch in her bosom for those falutary productions that she has given birth to for us. If she gives us errors, she also furnishes us, in experience and in virtue, with the antidotes fuitable to destroy their fatal effects. If she permits that the human race should, for a long time, groan under the weight of his vices and his follies; the thews him in virtue the fure remedy for his infirmities. If the evils that fome focieties experience are necessary, when they shall have become too incommodious, they will be irrefiftibly obliged to fearch those remedies, with which 0 ,

which Nature will always furnish them. If this Nature has rendered existence insupportable for some unfortunate beings, that she appears to have selected to be her victims, death is a door that she always leaves open to them, and which delivers them from their missortunes, when they judge them impossible to be cured.

Do not then let us accuse Nature with being inexorable to us; there does not exist in her an evil, for which she has not furnished the remedy to those who have the courage to feek for to apply it. This Nature it, and follows general and necessary laws in all its operations; the physical evil, and the moral evil, is not due to its wickedness, but to the necessity of things. Physical evil is the derangement produced in our organs, by physical causes that we see act; moral evil is the derangement produced in us by physical causes, of which the action is a fecret to us. These causes always finish by producing sensible effects, or capable of striking on our fenses; the thoughts and the wills of men, do not

shew themselves, but by the marked effects that they produce in them, or upon the beings whom Nature renders susceptible of feeling them. We fuffer, because it is the effence of fome beings to derange the economy of our machine; we enjoy, because the properties of some beings are analogous to our mode of existence; we are born, because it is the nature of some matter to combine itself, under a determinate form; we live, we act, we think, because it is the essence of certain combinations to act, and to maintain themselves in existence, by given means, during a fixed period: at length we die, because a necessary law prescribes to all the combinations that are formed, to deftrov themselves, or to dissolve themselves. From all this, it refults that Nature is impartial to all its productions; the fubmits us, like all the other beings, to the eternal laws, from which she has not been able to exempt us; if she did suspend them for an inflant, it is from thence that disorder would place itself in her, and that her harmony would be diffurbed.

Thofe

Those who study Nature, in taking experience for their guide, can alone be able to guess her fecrets, and unravel, by little and little, the woof, frequently imperceptible, of the causes of which she avails herfelf, to operate her greatest phænomena; by the aid of experience, we difcover in her, frequently new properties, and new modes of acting, unknown to the ages that have preceded us. Those which were marvellous, miracles, and fupernatural effects to our grandfathers become, at the prefent day, fimple and natural effects to us, of which we know the mechanism and the causes. Man, in fathoming Nature, has arrived at discovering the causes of earthquakes, of the periodical motion of feas, of fubterraneous conflagrations, of meteors, which were to our ancestors, and which are yet to the ignorant and uninformed, the indubitable figns of the wrath of Heaven. Our posterity, in following and rectifying the experience made by us, and by our fathers, will go farther yet, and will discover those effects and those causes which are totally veiled

veiled from our eyes. The united efforts of the human species, will arrive, perhaps, one day, at penetrating even into the sanctuary of Nature, to discover many of those mysteries, that to the present time, she appears to have refused to all our refearches.

In confidering man under his true afpect; in quitting authority to follow experience and reason; in submitting every thing entirely to physical laws, from which imagination has been willing to with-draw them, we shall see that the phænomena of the moral world follow the fame rules as those of the physical world, and that the greater part of those great effects, that our ignorance and our prejudices make us regard as inexplicable and as marvellous, will become simple and natural to us. We shall find that the eruption of a volcano, and the birth of a TAMERLANE are to nature the fame thing; in recurring to the first causes of the most striking events that we behold with consternation operate themfelves on the earth, of those terrible revolutions, of those frightful convulsions that

that distract and ravage nations, we shall find the wills, that operate in this world, the most surprising and the most extensive changes are moved in their principle by physical causes, which their minuteness make us judge contemptible, and but little capable of producing these phænomena that we find so great.

If we judge of causes by their effects, there are no small causes in the universe. In a nature where every thing is connected, where every thing acts and re-acts, where every thing moves itself and changes itfelf, composes itself and decomposes itself, forms itself and destroys itself, there is not an atom who does not play an important and necessary part; there is no imperceptible particle, which placed in convenient circumstances, does not operate prodigious effects. If we were placed in a fituation to follow the eternal chain that connects all the causes to the effects that we see, without loofing fight of any one of its links; if we could be able to unravel the ends of the infensible threads that move the thoughts, the wills, the passions of those

men who, according to their actions, we call puissant, we should find that they are true atoms that are the fecret leavers, of which nature avails herfelf, to move the moral world; it is the unexpected and necessary meeting of these particles, indifcernable to the fight, it is their aggregation, their combination, their proportion, their fermentation, which modifying man by little and little, frequently without his knowledge, and in despite of him, make him think, will, act, in a determinate and necessary mode; if his will and his actions have an influence upon a great many other men, here is the moral world in the greatest combustion. Too much acrimony in the bile of a FANATIC, a blood too much inflamed in the heart of a conqueror, a painful indigestion in the stomach of a MONARCH, a fantafm that paffes in the mind of a woman, are causes sufficient to make wars be undertaken, to fend millions of men to the butchery, to throw down walls, to reduce cities to ashes, to plunge nations in mourning and mifery, to breed famine and contagion, to propagate Vol. II. defodefolation and calamity during a long feries of ages, upon the furface of our globe.

The passion of a single individual of our species, when it disposes of the passions of a great number of others, arrives at combining and uniting their wills and their efforts, and thus decides the condition of the inhabitants of the earth. It is thus that an ambitious, crafty, voluptuous ARAB gave to his fellow countrymen an impulsion, of which the effect was to subjugate or desolate vast countries in ASIA, in AFRICA, and in EUROPE, and to change the religious fystem; the opinions and the customs of a confiderable portion of the inhabitants of But in recurring to the primiour world. tive fource of these strange revolutions, what were the concealed causes that had an influence upon this man, that excited his peculiar passions, that constituted his temperament? What were the matter from the combination of which refulted a voluptuous, a crafty, an ambitious, an enthusiastic, an eloquent man, in short, a perfonage capable of imposing on his fellow creatures, and to make them concur in his views?

would

views? They were the infenfible particles of his blood, it was the imperceptible texture of his fibres, they were the falts more or less acrid that stimulated his nerves, it was more or lefs of the fiery matter that circulated in his veins. From whence came these elements themselves? It was from the womb of his mother, it was from the aliments that nourished him, from the climate in which he had birth, the ideas that he had received, the air that he refpired, without reckoning a thousand inappreciable and transitory causes, that in the instance given, had modified and determined the passions of this important perfonage, become capable of changing the face of our globe.

To causes so weak in their principle, if they had in the origin opposed the smallest obstacles, the events fo marvellous; with which we are furprifed, would never have happened. A fit of an ague, caufed by a little bile too much inflamed, had been able to have rendered abhortive all the projects of the legislator of the musfulmen. A diet, a glass of water, a blood letting P 2

would have fometimes been fufficient to have faved kingdoms.

We fee then, that the condition of the human species, as well as that of each of the individuals that compose it, depends at every instant on insensible causes, which circumstances frequently fugitive give birth too, develope and put in action. We attribute to chance their effects, and we look upon them as fortuitous, whilst these causes operate necessarily, and according to fure rules. We have frequently, neither the fagacity, nor the honesty to recur to the true principles; we regard fuch weak motive-powers with contempt, because we judge them to be incapable of producing fuch great things. They are, however, these motive-powers fuch as they are, they are these springs so pitiful, which in the hands of Nature, and after her necessary laws, fuffice to move our universe. The conquests of a GENGIS-KAN, have nothing in them more strange, than the explofion of a mine, caufed in its principle, by a feeble spark, which commences, by lighting a fingle grain of powder, but

of which the fire, prefently communicates itself to many millions of other contiguous grains, of which the forces united and multiplied finish by throwing down ramparts, towns and mountains.

The condition of the human race, and that of each man, depends then at every instant upon infensible causes, concealed in the bosom of nature, until their action displays itself. The happiness, or the wretchedness, the prosperity, or the misery of each of us, and of whole nations, are attached to powers which it is impossible for us to foresee, to appreciate, or to arrest the action. Perhaps at this moment are amaffing and combining themselves the imperceptible particles of which the affemblage shall form a fovereign, that will be the fcourge or the faviour of a vast empire. We cannot ourselves be able to answer a fingle instant for our destiny; we have no knowledge of what is paffing in us, of the causes which act in our interior, nor of the circumstances that shall put them in action, and that shall develope their energy; it is

nevertheless on these causes, impossible to be unravelled, that depend our destiny for life. Frequently an unforeseen rencounter gives birth to a passion in our soul, of which the consequences shall necessarily have an influence upon our felicity. It is thus that the most virtuous man can be able, by the whimsical combination of unlooked for circumstances, to become in an instant the most criminal of men.

We shall find, without doubt, this truth frightful and terrible. But at bottom what has it more revolting than that which teaches us that this life, to which we are so strongly attached, may be able to be lost at every instant by an infinity of accidents as irremidable as unforeseen? Fatalism reconciles easily the good man to death, it makes him consider death as a sure means of withdrawing him from wickedness; this system shews death to the happy man himself as a means of escaping those missortunes that finish frequently by poisoning and embittering the most fortunate life.

Let us submit ourselves then to necessity; in despite of us it will always carry us along; let us refign ourselves to Nature; let us accept the good that she prefents to us, let us oppose to the necessary evil that fhe makes us experience, the necessary remedies that she consents to accord us. Do not let us trouble our mind with ufelefs inquietudes; let us enjoy with moderation, because pain is always the necesfary companion of all excess; let us follow the paths of virtue, because every thing proves to us that even in this world, obliged to be perverse, this virtue is necessary to render us estimable in the eyes of others, and contented with ourfelves.

Man feeble and vain! those pretendst to be free! alas! dost thou not see all the threads that enchain thee? dost thou not see that they are atoms that form thee, that they are atoms that move thee; that they are circumstances independent of thee, that modify thy being, and that rule thy condition? In a puissant Nature that environs thee, shalt thou then be the only being

THE SYSTEM

444

being that is able to refift her power? Dost thou believe that thy feeble prayers shall force her to stop in her eternal march, or to change her course?



CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

OF THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL; OF THE DOCTRINE OF A FUTURE LIFE; OF THE FEAR OF DEATH.

THE reflections presented in this work, concur to shew us clearly, what we ought to think of the human Soul, as well as of its operations or faculties; every thing proves to us, in the most convincing manner, that it acts, and moves itself according to laws, similar to those of the other beings of Nature; that it cannot be able to be distinguished from the body; that it is born, that it grows, that it is modified in the same progression as the body; in short, every thing ought to make us conclude, that it perishes with it. This soul, as Vol. II.

well as the body, passes through a state of weakness and infancy; it is then, that it is affailed by a multitude of modifications and of ideas, which it receives from exterior objects, by the way of its organs; it amasses. facts; it makes experience true or false; it forms to itself a system of conduct, according to which it thinks and acts, in a mode from whence refults its happiness, or its misfortune, its reason or its delirium, its virtues and its vices; arrived with the body at its power and its maturity, it does not cease an instant to partake with it its fenfations agreeable or difagreeable, its pleasures and its pains; in consequence, it approves or disapproves its state; it is found or difeafed, active or languishing, awake or afleep. In old age, man extinguishes himself entirely, his fibres and his nerves become stiff, his fenses become obtufe, his fight is troubled, his ears become hardened, his ideas become unconnected, his memory disappears, his imagination is cooled; what then becomes of his Soul? Alas! it finks at the fame time as the body; it becomes benumbed numbed with it, like it, it fulfils its functions only with pain, and this fubftance, that they have been willing to diftinguish from it, undergoes the same revolutions as does the body.

In despite of the proofs so convincing of the materiality of the foul, or of its identity with the body, fome thinkers have supposed that although this was perishable, his foul did not perish; that this portion of himself enjoyed the special privilege, of being IM-MORTAL, or exempt from the diffolution and the changes of form that we fee all the beings that Nature has composed undergo: in confequence they have perfuaded themselves that this privileged foul does not die. Its immortality appeared above 'all indubitable to those who supposed it fpiritual: after having made it a being, fimple, without extent, devoid of parts, totally different from every thing of which we have a knowledge, they pretended that it was not subjected to the laws that we find in all beings, of which experience fliews us the continual decomposition.

Men feeling in themselves a concealed

force that directed and produced, in an invisible manner, the motion of their machine, believed that the entire of Nature, of which they were ignorant of the energy, and of the mode of acting, owed its motion to an agent analogous to their foul, who acted upon the great machine in the fame manner as their foul upon their body. Man having supposed himself double, made Nature also double; he distinguished her from her own peculiar energy, he feparated her from her mover, which by little and little they made fpiritual. This being, diftinguished from Nature was regarded as the foul of the world, and the fouls of men, as opinions emanating from this univerfal foul. This opinion upon the origin of our fouls, is of a very remote antiquity. They were those of the EGYPTIANS of the CHAL-DEANS, of the HEBREWS, * as well as of

^{*} It appears that moses believed with the EGYPTIANS, the divine emanation of Souls; God, according to him, for med man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living Soul.

See II. Genesis, verse vii. Nevertheless the Christians reject at this day the system of divine emana-

East. It was in their schools that PHE-RECIDES, PYTHAGORAS, PLATO, drew up a doctrine flattering to the vanity and to the imagination of mortals. Man thus believed himself a portion of the Divinity, immortal like him in a part of himself. Nevertheless religions, invented in consequence renounced these advantages, that they judged incompatible, with the other parts of their systems; they pretended that the sovereign of nature, or its contriver,

befide their religion, having occasion for an HELL to torment the souls of reprobates, it had been needful to damn a portion of the Divinity conjointly with the souls of the victims that they facrificed to his peculiar vengeance. Although Moses, by the words that have been quoted, appears to indicate, that the Soul was a portion of the Divinity, we do not see, however, that the doctrine of the immortality of the Soul was established in any one of the books attributed to him. It appears that it was during the Babylonish captivity that the Jews learnt the doctrine of suture rewards and punishments, taught by zoroaster to the persians, but which the Hebrew legislator did not know, or at least he left his people ignorant of it.

was not the foul of man, but that, in virtue of his omnipotence he created human fouls, in proportion as he produced the bodies that they must animate, and they taught that these souls, once produced, by an effect of the same omnipotence enjoyed immortality.

However it may be, from these variations upon the origin of Souls, those who supposed them emanating from God himself, have believed that after the death of the body, that served them from an envelope or for a prison, they returned by REFUNDING to their first source. Those who, without adopting the opinion of divine emanation, admired the spirituality and immortality of the Soul, were obliged to suppose a region, an abode for these Souls, which their imagination painted to them according to their hopes, their sears, their desires, and their prejudices.

Nothing is more popular than the doctrine of the immortality of the Soul; nothing is more univerfally diffused than the expectation of another life. Nature having inspired all men with the most lively love for their existance, the desire of pro-

ferving

ferving themselves for ever was a necessary confequence; this defire prefently converted itself into certainty for them, and from that defire of existing for ever that Nature had imprinted on them, they made an argument to prove that man would never cease to exist. Our Soul, says ABADY, has no useles desires, it desires naturally an eternal life, and by a very strange logic, he concluded that this defire could not fail of being fulfilled. * However it may be, men thus disposed listened with avidity to those who announced to them fystems so conformable to their wishes. Nevertheless, do not let us regard as a thing fupernatural the defire of existing, which was, and always will be, the effence of man; do not let us be furprifed if he received with eagerness an hypothesis that flattered him

CICERO had faid before ABADY, naturam ipfant de immortalitate animorum tacitam judicare; nescio quomodo inhæret in mentibus quasi sæculorum quoddam augurium. Permanere animos arbitramur consensunationum omnium. Here is the idea of the immortality of the Soul already changed into an innate idea: nevertheless, this same cicero, regards pherecides, as the inventor of this doctrine.

TUSCULAM DISPUTAT. LIE. 1.

in promiting him that his defire would one day be fatisfied; but let us beware how we conclude that this defire is an indubitable proof of the reality of this future life, with which men, for their prefent happinels, are but too much occupied. passion for existence is in us, only a natural confequence of the tendency of a fenfible being, of whom the effence is to be willing to conferve himself. This desire follows in men the energy of their Souls, or the force of their imagination always ready to realize that which they defire ftrongly. We defire the life of the body, and nevertheless this defire is frustrated; why should not the defire of the life of our Soul be frustrated like the first ?*

The most simple reflexions upon the nature of our Soul ought to convince us that the idea of its immortality is only an illu-

fion.

Here is the manner in which the partifans of the doctrine of the immortality of the Soul, reason. All men define to live for ever, therefore they will live for ever, could we not retort the argument, and say to them, all men naturally define to be rich, therefore all men will one day be rich.

fion. Indeed what is our Soul, fave the principle of fenfibility? What is it to think, enjoy, fuffer, fave to feel? What is life, fave the affemblage of the modifications or motions, peculiar to an organized being? Thus, as foon as the body ceases to live, its sensibility can no longer be able to exercise itself; it can then no longer be able to have ideas, nor in confequence, thoughts. Ideas, as we have proved, can be able to come to us only by the fenses; now, how will they have it, that once deprived of fenfes, we can vet be capable of having perceptions, fensations, ideas? Since then, they have made the Soul a being, feparated from the animated body, for why have they not made life a being, diftinguished from the living body? Life is the totality of the motion of all the bodies? feeling and thought make a part of this motion; thus in the dead man, thefe motion will ceafe, like all the others.

Indeed, by what reasoning would they pretend to prove to us, that this Soul, which cannot be able to feel, think, will,

Vol. II. R

act, but by the aid of its organs, can be able to have pain or pleafure, or even that it can be able to have the consciousness of its existence, when the organs that should warn it of it, are decomposed or destroyed? Is it not evident, that the Soul depends on the arrangement of the parts of the body, and on the order according to which these parts conspire to perform these functions or motion? Thus, the organic structure once destroyed, we cannot be able to doubt, that the Soul must be destroyed also. Do we not see, that during the whole course of our lives, this Soul is changed, deranged, troubled by all the changes that our organs experience? And they will have it, that this Soul acts, thinks, fubfifts, when thefe fame organs shall have entirely disappeared!

An organized being, may be able to be compared to a clock, which once broken, is no longer fuitable to the use for which it was destined. To say that the Soul shall feel, shall think, shall enjoy, shall suffer after the death of the body,

is to pretend that a clock, broken into a thousand pieces, can be able to continue to strike, or mark the hours. Those who tell us, that our Soul can be able to subsist, notwithstanding the destruction of the body, evidently support that the modification of a body, will be able to conferve itself, after the subject shall have been destroyed; this is what is completely absurd.

They will not fail to tell us, that the confervation of Souls, after the death of the body, is an effect of the divine omnipotence: but this would be supporting an absurdity, by a gratuitous hypothesis. The Divine Omnipotence, of whatever Nature they may suppose it, cannot be able to make a thing exist and not exist, at the same time; it cannot make, that a Soul shall feel or think, without the intermediates, necessary to have thoughts.

Let them cease then telling us, that reason is not wounded by the doctrine of the immortality of the Soul, or by the expectation of a future life. These notions, made entirely to flatter, or to disturb the

imagination of the uninformed, who do not reason, cannot be able to appear, either convincing, or even probable to enlightened minds. Reafon exempted from the illusions of prejudice, is, without doubt, wounded by the supposition of a Soul, that feels, that thinks, that is afflicted or rejoices, that has ideas, without having organs, that is to fav, destitute of the only known and natural means, by which it is possible for it to have perceptions, fenfations, and ideas. If they reply to us, that there can be able to exist other means, supernatural or unknown, we shall answer, that these means of transmitting ideas to the Soul, feparated from the body, are not more known, or more within the reach of those who suppose it, than they are of us. It is at least very evident, that all those who reject innate ideas, cannot be able, without contradicting their principles, to admit the doctrine, that has fo little foundation, of the immortality of the Soul.

In defpite of the confolation that fo many people pretend to find in the notion of an eternal existence; in despite of the firm perfuation in which fo many men affure us they are, that their fouls will furvive their bodies, we fee them very much alarmed at the dissolution of this body, and that they do not look upon their end, which they ought to defire as the period of many pains, but with a great deal of inquietude. So true it is, that the real, the prefent, even accompanied with pain, has much more influence upon men, than the most beautiful chimeras of the future, which they never fee but through the clouds of uncertainty! Indeed, in defpite of the pretended conviction in which the most religious men are of a bleffed eternity, these hopes so flattering do not prevent them from fearing and trembling, when they think of the necessary diffolution of their bodies. Death was always for those who are called MOR-TALS, the most frightful point of view; they regard it as a strange phænomenon, contrary to the order of things, opposed to Nature; in a word as an effect of the celeftial vengeance, as the PAY OF SIN. Although every thing proves to them that this this death is inevitable, they can never be able to familiarize themselves with its idea; they never think of it but they tremble, and the assurance of possessing an immortal Soul, does but feebly indemnify them for the grief of being deprived of their perishable bodies. Two causes contributed again to strengthen and nourish their alarms; the one was that this death commonly accompanied with pains, wrests from them an existence that pleases them, that they know, to which they are accustomed; the other was, the uncertainty of the state that must succeed to their actual existence.

The illustrious bacon has faid that men fear death for the same reason that children have a fear of darkness.* We naturally challenge ourselves with every thing that we do not know; we are willing to see clearly, to the end that we may guarantee ourselves from those objects that can be able to menace us, or that we may be rendered capable of

pro-

^{*} Nam veluti fueri trepidant, atque omnia cæcis
In tenebris metiunt: sie nos in luce timemus
Interdum, nibilo quæ sunt metuenda magis.....
Lucretius Lib: 111. verse 87, and seq.

procuring for ourfelves, those which can be able to be useful to us. The man who exists cannot be able to form to himself the idea of non existence; as this state disturbs him, his imagination is fet to work for want of experience, to paint to him, well or ill, this uncertain state. Accustomed to think, to feel, to be put in action, to enjoy fociety; he fees the greatest misfortune in a diffolution that shall deprive him of the objects and of the fensations that his prefent Nature has rendered necessary to him, which shall prevent him from being warned of his being, which shall deprive him of his pleafure, to plunge him into nothing. In fupposing it, even exempt from pains, he always looks upon this nothing, as an afflicting folitude, as an heap of profound darknefs; he fees himfelf in a general defolation, destitute of all assistance, and feels the rigour of this frightful fituation. But a profound fleep, does it not fuffice to give us a true idea of nothing? Does it not deprive us of every thing? Does it not appear to annihilate us to the universe; and to annihilate this universe to us? Death

is it any thing elfe than a profound and permanent fleep? It is for want of being able to form an idea of death, that man dreads it; if he formed to himself a true idea of it, he would cease from thence to fear it; but he cannot be able to conceive a state, where they do not feel; he believes then, that when he shall no longer exist, he will have the feeling and the confciousness of those things that appear to him at this day, fo fad, and fo mournful; his imagination pictures to him, his funeral pomp, the grave that they are digging for him, those lamentable fongs that will accompany him to his last abode; he perfuades himself, that these hideous objects, will affect him, even after his difeafe, as painfully as in the prefent state, in which he enjoys his fenfes*.

Mortal led astray by fear! After thy death, thine eyes will see no more, thine ears will hear no more; from the bottom of

^{*} Nec videt in vora nullum fore morte allium, SE Qui possit vivus sibi SE lugere peremptum, Stansque jacentem, nec lacerari urive dolore.

thy grave, thou wilt no more be the witnefs of this scene, that thine imagination reprefents to thee at prefent, under fuch difmal colours; thou wilt no more take any part in that, which shall be done in the world, thou wilt no more be occupied with what they shall do to thine inanimate remains, than thou couldit be able to be on the day before that which gave thee a place amongst the beings of the human species. To die, is to ceafe to think, and to feel, to enjoy and to fuffer; thine ideas will perish with thee; thy forrows will not follow thee Think of death, not to in the tomb. feed thy fears and thy melancholy, but to accustom thyself to look upon it with a peaceful eye, and to cheer thee up against the false terrors that the enemies of thy repose labour to inspire thee with.

The fears of death are vain illusions, that must disappear, as soon as we look upon this necessary event under its true point of view. A great man has defined philosophy to be A MEDITATION OF DEATH*;

^{*} MEAETH TOT GANATOT. LUCAN has faid, scire mori fors prima viris.

he is not willing by that, to make us understand that we ought to occupy ourfelves forrowfully with our end, with the view of nourishing our fears; he is willing, without doubt, to invite us to familiarize ourselves with an object, that Nature has rendered necessary to us, and to accustom us to expect it with a ferene countenance. If life is a benefit, if it is necessary to love it, it is not less necessary to quit it; and reason ought to teach us a refignation to the decrees of fate. Our well-being then exacts from us, that we should contract the habit of contemplating without alarm, an event that our effence has rendered inevitable to us; our interest demands, that we should not embitter, by continual fears, a life that cannot be able to have any charms for us, if we never view the period of it, but with trembling. Reason and our interest concur to assure us against the vague terrors. that imagination has inspired us with in this respect. If we call them to our affistance, they would familiarife us with an object that only affrights us, because we have

have not a knowledge of it, or because they only flew it to us disfigured, with the hideous accompaniments that fuperstition has given it. Let us then despoil death of these vain illusions, and we shall fee, that it is only the fleep of life; that this fleep will not be troubled with any difagreeable dreams, and that a troublefome awakening, will never follow it. To die, is to fleep; it is to enter into that state of infensibility, in which we were, before we were born, before we had any fenses, before we had the consciousness of our actual existence. Laws as necessary as those which gave us birth, will make us return into the bosom of Nature, from which they have drawn us, to reproduce afterwards, under some new form, which it would be ufelefs for us to know: without confulting us, she places us for a time in the order of organized beings, without our confent, she will oblige us to quit it, to occupy another order.

Do not let us complain of her callofity; she makes us undergo a law from which she does not except any one being that she contains.* If all is born and perithes, if every thing is changed and is deftroyed, if the birth of a being is never more than the first step towards its end, how had it been possible that man, of whom the machine is fo frail, of whom the parts are fo moveable and fo complicated, were exempted from a common law, that wills that the folid earth that we inhabit shall change itself, alter itself, and perhaps destroy itself! feeble mortal! thou pretendst to exist for ever; wilt thou then, that for thee alone, Nature shall change her course? Dost thou not fee in those eccentric comets that appear and aftonish thine eyes, that the planets themselves are subject to death? Live then in peace, as long as Nature permits, and die without terror, if thy mind is enlightened by reason.

In despite of the simplicity of these re-

^{*} Quid de rerum natura querimur, illa se bene gessit; vita si scias uti, longa est. v. SENEC. DE BREVITATE VITA. All the world complains of the shortness of life, and of the rapidity of time, and yet men for the greater part do not know what to do either with time or with life!

flexions, nothing is more rare than men truly fortified against the fears of death: The wife man himself turns pale at its approach; he has occasion to collect the whole force of his mind to expect it with ferenity. Do not let us be furprifed then if the idea of death is fo revolting to the generality of mortals; it terrifies the young man; it redoubles the chagrin and the forrow of the old man, overwhelmed with infirmities; it even makes him dread it much more than it does the youth, who is in the vigour of his life; the old man is much more accustomed to life; beside his mind is more feeble, and has lefs energy. At length difeases consume him with torments, and the unhappy wretch, plunged in misfortune, has rarely dared to recur to death, which he ought to confider as the period of all his pains.

If we fearch for the fource of this pufillanimity we shall find it in our Nature, which attaches us to life, and in the defect of energy in our foul, which, far from strengthening, every thing strives to enfeeble and to bruise. All the human institutions. inftitutions, all our opinions, conspire to augment our fears, and to render our ideas of death more terrible and more revolting. Indeed superstition has pleased itself with shewing death under the most frightful traits; it represents it to us a dreadful moment, that not only puts an end to our pleafures, but again, that it gives us up without defence to the strange rigour of a pitiless defpot, of whom nothing will foften the decrees: according to it the most virtuous man is never certain of pleafing him, has reason to tremble for the severity of his rudgments; dreadful torments, and without end, will punish the victims of his caprice for the involuntary weaknesses, or the necessary faults that shall have kindled his fury. This implacable tyrant will avenge himself of their infirmities, of their momentary offences, of the propenlities that he has given to their heart, of the errors of their mind, of the opinions, of the ideas, of those passions that they shall have received in the focieties in which he has caufed them to be born; above all, he will never pardon them for not having been able

to understand an inconceivable Being, for having been able to deceive themselves upon his account, for having dared to think for themselves, for having resuled to listen to enthusiastic guides or impostors, and for having had the audacity to consult the reason, which however, he has given them, to regulate their conduct through the road of life.

Such are the afflicting objects with which religion occupies its unhappy and credulous disciples. Such are the fears that the tyrants of the thoughts of men shew us as falutary. In despite of the small effect that they produce on the conduct of the greater number of those who fay they are, or who believe themselves perfuaded, they would be willing to pass these notions for the most powerful rampart that they can be able to oppose to the irregularities of men. Nevertheless, as we shall make them fee prefently, these fystems, or rather these chimeras, fo terrible, have no effect uponthe greater number, who dream of them but rarely, and never in the moment that passion, interest, pleasure, or example hurries them along. If these fears act, it is always

upon those, who have not any occafion to abstain themselves from evil or to
do good. They make honest hearts tremble, and have no essect upon the perverse.
They torment tender Souls, and leave in
repose those Souls that are hardened; they
insest tractable and gentle minds, they cause
no trouble to rebellious spirits: thus they
only alarm those who are already sufficiently alarmed, they restrain only those who
are already restrained.

These notions then impose nothing on the wicked; when by chance they act upon them, it is only to redouble the wickedness of their natural character, to justify them in their own eyes, to surnish them with pretexts to exercise it without fear and without scruple. Indeed the experience of a great number of ages has shewn us to what excess the wickedness and the passions of men have carried them, when they have been authorised or unchained by religion, or at least when they have been able to cover themselves under its mantle. Men have never been more ambitious, more covetous, more crafty,

more.

more cruel, more feditious, than when they have perfuaded themselves that religion permitted or ordered them to be fo: this religion did no more then than give an invincible force to their natural passions, which they could be able, under its facred auspices, to exercise with impunity, and without any remorfe. Still more, the greatest villains, in giving a free course to the detestable propensities of their natural wickedness, have believed they merited of Heaven, in the cause of which they shewed zeal, and exempted themselves by crimes, from the chastisement of a God whose wrath they thought they had deferved.

Here then are the effects that the falutary notions of theology produce on mortals! These reslexions will be able to surnish us with answers to those who tell us that if religion did promise Heaven equally to the wicked as to the good, there would not be any incredulous of the other life. We reply then, that religion, in fact, accords Heaven to the wicked; it places in it frequently the most used. Vol. II.

less and the most wicked of men.* It sharpens, as we shall see, the passions of these wicked men, in legitimating those crimes which without its sanction they would fear to commit, or for which they would have shame and remorfe. In short, the ministers of religion furnish, to the most wicked men, the means of diverting the thunder-bolt from over their heads, and of arriving at eternal felicity.

With respect to the incredulous, there may be, without doubt, wicked men amongst them, as well as amongst the most credulous; but incredulity does no more suppose wickedness, than credulity supposes goodness. On the contrary, the man who thinks, and meditates, knows better the motives to be good, than him who lets

himfelf

^{*} Such were Moses, Samuel, David, amongst the Jews; Mahomet, amongst the Mussulmen; amongst the Christians, Constantine, St. Cyril, St. Athanasius, St. Dominic, and a great many other religious robbers, vagabonds, and zealous perfecutors, whom the church reveres. We can be able also to join to them the Crusaders, the Beaguers, &c. &c.

himself be guided in blindness by uncertain motives, or by the interests of others. All fensible men have the greatest interest in examining those opinions which they pretend must have an influence upon their eternal happiness: if they find them false or injurious to their present life, they will never conclude from them, that they have not another life to fear or hope, that they can be able in this life to deliver themselves up with impunity to vices, which would do an injury to themselves, or which would draw upon them the contempt or the anger of fociety. The man who does not expect another life, is only more interested in prolonging his existence, and in rendering himself dear to his fellow men, in the only life of which he has a knowledge; he has made a great firide towards felicity, in difengaging himfelf from those terrors that afflict the others.

Indeed SUPERSTITION took a pleafure in rendering man flothful, credulous, pulillanimous! It made a principle of afflicting him without intermission; it made a duty, of redoubling to him the horrors of death; ingenious in tormenting him, it extended

his inquietudes, beyond even his known existence, and its ministers, to dispose of him more fecurely in this world, invented the regions of the world to come, in referving to themselves, the right of causing to be recompensed those flaves, who shall have fubmitted to their arbitrary laws, and of caufing to be punished by the Divinity, those who shall have rebelled against their wills. Far from confoling mortals, far from moulding the reason of man, far from teaching him to yield under the hands of necessity, RELIGION, in a thousand countries, strives to render death more bitter to him, to make its yoke more heavy, to adorn its retinue with a multitude of hideous phantoms, and to render its approach more frightful and terrible than itself. thus, that it has arrived at filling the univerfe with enthusiasts, whom it seduces by vague promises, and with contemptible slaves, whom it restrains by the fear of the imaginary evils, with which their end fliall be followed. It has at length perfuaded them, that their actual existence is only a journey, by which they will arrive at a more important life.

life. This irrational doctrine of a future life, prevents them from occupying themfelves with their true happiness, from even dreaming of perfectioning their inftitutions, their laws, their morals, and their fciences; vain chimeras have abforbed all their attention; they confent to groan under religious and political tyranny, to live in error, to languish in misfortune, in the hope of being one day more happy, in the firm confidence that their calamities, and their stupid patience will conduct them to a felicity without end; they have believed themselves submitted to a cruel Divinity, who is willing to make them purchase their future well-being, at the price of every thing that is most dear and valuable to them here below; they have painted their God to them, as the fworn enemy of the human race, and they have given them to understand, that Heaven irtitated against them, is willing to appease itself, and to punish them eternally, for those efforts which they should make to withdraw themselves from their pains. It is thus, that the doctrine of a future life,

life, was one of the most fatal errors, with which the human species was infected. This doctrine, plunged nations into sloth-fulness, into languor, into indifference for their well being, or else it precipitated them into surious enthusiasm, that carried them on frequently to rend themselves in pieces, in order to merit Heaven.

They will demand, perhaps, by what road men have been conducted, to form to themselves, the ideas so gratuitous and so ridiculous, which they have of the other world. I reply, that it is true, we have no idea of the future life, which does not exist for us; they are our ideas, of the past and the present, that surnish our imagination with the materials of which it avails itself, to construct the edifice of the regions of suturity. We believe, says hobbes that, that which is, shall always be, and that the same causes, will have the same effects.* Man, in his actual state, has two

quence

^{*} When we reason by analogy, we always sound our reasoning upon the persuasion, frequently extremely salfe, that, that which has been already done, will by conse-

modes of feeling, the one, that he approves, the other, that he disapproves; thus, perfuaded that these two modes of seeling must follow him, even beyond his present existence; he placed in the regions of eternity, two distinguished abodes; the one was destined to felicity, and the other to misfortune; the one must contain the friends of God, the other was a prison, destined to avenge the outrages that should be committed against him, by his miserable subjects.

Such is the true origin of the ideas upon a future life, so diffused amongst men. We every where see an ELYSIUM and a TARTARY, a PARADISE and an HELL, in a word, two distinguished abodes, constructed, according to the imagination of enthusiasts, or of craftyknaves, who have invented them, and accommodated them to the prejudices, to the ideas, to the hopes, and to the fears of the people who believe them. The IN-

quence be done again; and we look upon it as a thing indubitable, that, that which shall arrive, will always be smilar to that which has happened.

DIANS figure to themselves the first of these abodes like unto that of inaction, and of a permanent repose, because, being inhabitants of a burning climate, they see in repose supreme selicity; the Mussul-Men promise themselves corporeal pleasures, similar to those that actually make the objects of their views; the CHRISTI-ANS hope, in the gross, for inestable and spiritual pleasures, in a word, for an happiness of which they have no one idea.

Of whatever nature these pleasures might be, men apprehended that a body would be needful, that their Soul might be able to enjoy or to experience the pains reserved to the enemies of the Divinity; from thence the doctrine of the RESURRECTION, by which they have supposed that this body, which they see before their eyes, putrified, decomposed, dissolved, would recompose itself one day by an effect of the Divine Omnipotence, to form anew an envelope for the Soul, to the end that it may receive conjointly with it the recompense and the chastisement that both should have merited

rited during their primitive union.* This incomprehensible opinion invented, they say, by the MAGI, † yet finds a great number of adherents, who have never seriously examined it. At length the others incapable of elevating themselves to these sub-lime notions, believed, that under divers forms, man animated successively, different animals of various species, and never ceased to inhabit the earth in which he is found; such was the opinion of those who believed in METEMPSYCHOSIS, or the transmigration of Souls from body to body.

As for the miferable abode of fouls, the imagination of impostors who were willing

* The doctrine of the RESURRECTION, appears at bottom ufeless to all those who believe in the existence of Souls, feeling, thinking, suffering, or enjoying after their separation from the body: they must suppose like BERKELEY, that the Soul has occasion neither of body, nor of any exterior being, to experience sensations, and to have ideas. The MALEBRANCHISTES must suppose, that the rejected Souls will see hell in God, and will feel themselves burn, without having occasion for their bodies for that purpose.

† Magi, wife men amongst the Persians.

to govern the people, strove to assemble together the most frightful images to render it more terrible. Fire is of all beings that which produces in us the most fmarting fenfation; they have supposed then that the Divine Omnipotence could not be able to invent any thing more cruel than fire to punish his enemies. Thus fire was the term at which the imagination of man was obliged to stop itself, and they agreed pretty generally that fire would one day avenge the outraged Divinity, the fame as by the cruelty, and madness of men, this element avenges him frequently in this Thus they paint the victims of world.*

* It is, without doubt, from thence that has come atonements by fire, used by a great number of oriental nations, and practifed yet at this day, by the priests of the god of peace, who have the cruelty, to make perish by the slames, those who have not the same ideas of the Divinity as themselves. By a consequence of the same delirium, the civil magistrates condemn to the same delirium, the civil magistrates condemn to the same delirium, the same blasphemers, the robbers of churches, that is to say, those who do not do harm to any one, whilst they content themselves, with punishing, with a more gentle torture, those who do a real injury to society. It is thus, that religion overturns all ideas.

his anger as confined in fiery dungeons, as perpetually rolling in a vortex of flames, plunged in gulphs of fulphur and bitumen, and making their infernal vaults refound with their useless groanings and gnashing of teeth.

But, perhaps they will fay, how could men be able to determine themselves to believe an existance accompanied with eternal torments, above all, there being many amongst them who, according to their religious fystems, had reason to fear it for themselves? Many causes have concurred to make them adopt an opinion fo revolting. In the first place very few fensible men have been able to believe fuch an abfurdity, when they have deigned to make use of their reason, or elfe if they have believed it, the atrocity of this notion was always counterbalanced by the idea of the mercy, and of the goodness, that they attributed to their God.* In the fecond place, those people

^{*} If, as the CHRISTIANS pretend, the torments that are to come, must be infinite in their duration, and in their U 2 intensenss.

who were blinded by fear, never rendered themselves an account of the most strange doctrines which they received from their legislators, or which were transmitted to them by their fathers. In the third place, each man sees the object of his terrors only at a favourable distance, and beside superstition promises him the means of escaping the tortures that he believes he has merited. At length, like those sick people that we see attached to even the most painful existence, man preferred the idea of an unhappy and known existence, to that of a non-existence, which he looked upon, as the

intenseness, I am obliged to conclude from thence, that man, who is a finite being, cannot be able to suffer infinitely; God himself, cannot be able to communicate to him infinity, in despite of the efforts that he makes to punish him eternally for his faults, which have themselves, only effects, finished or limited by time. The same reasoning can be able to apply itself to the joys of Paradise, where a finite being will no more comprehend an infinite God, than he does in this world. On the other hand, if, as CHRISTIANITY teaches, God perpetuates the existence of sin: this is what does not accord itself with the love of order, that they grant him.

most

most frightful of evils, because he could not be able to have an idea of it, or because his imagination made him regard this non-existence, or this nothing, as the confused assemblage of all the evils together. A known evil, however great it might be able to be, alarmed men less, above all when there remained to them the hope of avoiding it, than an evil of which they had no knowledge, upon which in consequence, their imagination believed itself obliged to labour, and to which they did not know how to oppose a remedy.

We fee then that SUPERSTITION, far from confoling men upon the necessity of dying, only redoubles their terrors by the evils with which it pretends their decease will be followed: these terrors are so strong, that the miserable wretches who believe these formidable doctrines, of which they are the consequence, pass their days in affliction, and in tears. What shall we say of this opinion, destructive of all society, and yet adopted by so many nations, that announces to them, that a severe God can be able

able at each instant, like a thief, to take them unprovided, and come and exercise upon the earth, his rigorous judgments? What ideas can be more fuitable to frighten, to discourage men, to take from them the defire of ameliorating their condition, than the afflicting prospect of a world, always ready to dissolve itself, and of a Divinity feated upon the ruins of the entire of Nature, to judge the human species? Such are, neverthelefs, the fatal opinions, with which the mind of nations, has been fed for thousands of years since; they are so dangerous, that if by a happy want of just inference, they did not derogate in their conduct, from these afflicting ideas, they would fall into the most shameful stupidity; how could they occupy themselves with a perishable world, that should be able to fall at each inflant? How dream of rendering themselves happy on an earth, that is only the porch of an eternal kingdom? Is it then furprifing, that the fuperstitions to which fimilar doctrines ferve for the basis, have prescribed to their disciples, a total detachment from things here below,

below, an entire renunciation of the most innocent pleasures, a fluggishness, a pufillanimity, an abjection of Soul, an infociability, that renders them useless to themfelves, and dangerous to others? If neceffity did not oblige men to depart in their practice, from their irrational fystems, if their wants did not bring them back to reason, in despite of their religious doctrines, the whole world would prefently become a vast defert, inhabited by some isolated favages, who would not even have the courage to multiply themselves. What are these but notions, which they must neceffarily put afide, in order to make human affociation fubfift!

Nevertheless, the doctrine of a future life, accompanied with rewards and punishments, has been regarded for a great number of ages, as the most powerful, or even as the only motive, capable of restraining the passions of men, and which can be able to oblige them to be virtuous; by degrees, this doctrine has become the basis of almost all religious and political systems, and it appears at this day, that they

they cannot be able to attack this prejudice, without absolutely breaking in pieces, the bonds of society. The founders of religion, have made use of it, to attach their credulous disciples; legislators have regarded it, as a curb, the most capable of keeping them under their yoke; many physosophers themselves, have believed in good faith, that this doctrine was necessary to terrify men, and to divert them from crime.*

They cannot indeed, difallow, that this doctrine has been of the greatest utility to those who gave religions to nations, and who made themselves its ministers; it was the foundation of their power, the

* When the doctrine of the IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL, came out of the school of PLATO, and diffused itself among the GREEKS, it caused the greatest ravages, and determined a multitude of men, discontented with their condition, to terminate their days. PTOLEMY PHILADELPHUS, king of EGYPT, seeing the effects that this doctrine, which they regard at the present day as so falutary, produced upon the brains of his subjects, defended the teaching of, under the penalty of death. See the argument of the dialogue of PHÆDON, in the translation of DACIER.

fource

fource of their riches, and the permanent cause of that blindness and of those terrors in which, their interest was willing, that the human species might be nourished. It is by this doctrine, that the priest became the rival and the master of kings: nations are filled with enthusiasts drunk with religion, always much more disposed to listen to its menaces, than to the councils of reason, to the orders of the fovereign, to the cries of Nature, to the laws of fociety. litics was itself enflaved to the caprices of the priest; the temporal monarch was obliged to bend under the voke of the eternal monarch; the one only difposed of this perishable world, the other extended his power unto a world to come, more important for men than the earth, in which they are only pilgrims and paffengers. Thus, the doctrine of another life, placed the government itself in a dependance upon the priest; it was no more than his first fubject, and he was never obeyed, but when the two, were in accord to overwhelm the human species. Nature in vain cried out tomen, to take care of their present VOL. II. felicity; X

felicity, the priest ordered them to be unhappy in the expectation of a suture selicity; reason in vain, said to them, that they ought to be peaceable; the priest breathed into them fanatacism and sury, and obliged them to disturb the public tranquillity, every time there was a question of the interests of the invisible monarch of another life, or of his ministers in this.

Such are the fruits, that politics has gathered from the doctrine of a future life; the regions of the world to come, have enabled the priesthood to conquer this The expectation of celestial feworld. licity and the fear of future tortures, only ferved to prevent men from feeking after the means of rendering themselves happy here below. Error, under whatever afpect we confider it, will never be more than a fource of evil for the human species. The doctrine of another life, in prefenting to mortals an ideal happiness, will make enthufiasts; in overwhelming them with fears, it will make useless beings, cowards, atrabilarious, furious men, who will loofe fight of their prefent abode, to occupy themfelves only with the imaginary world to come, and the chimerical evils, which they must fear after their death.

If they tell us, that the doctrine of future rewards and punishments, is the most powerful curb to repress the passions of men; we shall reply, by calling in daily experience. If for a little they look around them, they will fee this affertion contradicted, and they will find, that thefe marvellous speculations, incapable of changing the temperaments of men, of annihilating those passions which the vices of fociety itself, contribute to bring forth in all hearts, do not diminish in any manner, the number of the wicked: in those nations that appear the most strongly convinced of it, we fee affaffins, thieves, crafty knaves, oppressors, adulterers, voluptuaries; all are perfuaded of the reality of another life, but in the whirlwind of diffination and of pleasure, in the fury of their passions, they no longer see this formidable future life, which has no kind of influence upon their prefent conduct.

In fliort, in those countries where the

doctrine of another life is fo strengly established, that each irritates himself against whoever should have the temerity to combat, or even doubt it, we see that it is perfectly incapable of imposing on princes who are unjust, negligent and debauched; covetous and lewd courtezans; on extortioners, who infolently nourish themselves with the fubstance of the people; on women without modefty; on a multitude of drunken, intemperate, and vicious men; on many, even amongst those priests, of whom the function is to announce the vengeance of Heaven. If you demand of them, for why then they have dared to give themselves up to these actions, which they know are fuitable, to draw upon them eternal punishments? They will reply to you, that the fury of their passions, the torrent of their habit, the contagion of example, or even that the power of circumstances have carried them along, and made them forget the terrible confequences, which their conduct could be able to draw upon them. Befide, they will tell you, that the treasures of the Divine mercy

mercy are infinite; and that a repentance fuffices to efface the blackeft and the most accumulated crimes.* In this multitude of villains who, each in his manner, desolate society, you will only find a small number of men sufficiently intimidated, by the sears of a miserable life to come, to resist their propensities; what did I say! these propensities are too weak to carry them along, and without the doctrine of another life, the law and the sear of censure, would have been sufficient motives to have prevented them from rendering themselves criminal.

It is indeed fearful and timorous Souls upon whom the terrors of another life make

* The idea of the Divine mercy, chears up the wicked, and makes them forget the Divine justice. Indeed, these two attributes being supposed equally infinite in God, must counterbalance each other in such a manner, that neither the one nor the other can be able to act. However it may be, the wicked reckon upon an IMMOVEABLE God; or flatter themselves, by the assistance of his mercy, to escape the essects of his justice. The highwayman, who sees, that sooner or later he shall perish at the gallows, says, that he will be quit, for making a good end. The CHRISTIANS believe, that a true reputance essays all their sins. The INDIANS attribute the same virtues to the waters of the GANGES.

a profound impression; men of this fort are born with moderate passions, a weak organization, an imagination but little fiery; it is not then surprising, that in these beings, already restrained by their Nature, the fear of a suture life counterbalances the weak efforts of their seeble passions; but it is not the same with those determined villains, with those men habitually vicious, of whom nothing can arrest the excesses, and who in their transports that their eyes to the sear of the laws of this world, despising still more those of the other.

Nevertheless how many persons, say they are, and even believe themselves restrained by the sears of another life! But either they deceive us, or they impose upon themselves: they attribute to these sears that which is only the effect of motives much nearer, such as the seebleness of their machine, the disposition of their temperament, the little energy of their Souls, their natural timidity, the ideas of education, the sear of the immediate and physical consequences of their irregularities, or of their

their bad actions. These are the true motives that restrain them, and not the vague notions of a future life, which men, who are otherwise the most perfuaded of it, forget every instant that a powerful interest folicits them to sin. If for a little they would pay attention, they would fee that they give the honor of that, to the fear of their God, which is only in reality the effect of their peculiar weakness, of their pufillanimity, of the little interest they have found to commit evil; they would not act otherwife when even they should not have this fear, and if they reflected they would feel that it is always necessity that makes men act as they do.

Man cannot be restrained when he does not find within himself motives sufficiently powerful to restrain him, or to conduct him back to reason. There is nothing either in this world or in the other, that can be able to render virtuous, him, whom an untoward organization—a mind badly cultivated—a violent imagination—inveterate habits—fatal examples—powerful interests invite in every quarter, to commit crimes.

there

There are no speculations capable of restraining him who braves the public opinion, who despites the law, who is deaf to the cries of his conscience; whose power places him in this world out of the reach of punishment or of censure.* In his transports he will fear still less a distant suturity, of which the idea will always give place to that which he shall judge necessary to his immediate and present happiness. All

* They do not fail to fay, that the fear of another life is a curb, at least useful to restrain PRINCES and NOBLES, who have no other; and that this curb, fuch as it is, is better than no curb at all. We have fufficiently proved, that this curb of another life, does not by any means, arrest sovereigns; there is another curb, more real and more fuitable to make them refrain and to prevent them from injuring fociety, which is to make them fubmit to the laws of fociety, and to take away the right or the capability of abusing its powers, to enslave it to their peculiar caprices. A good political conflitution, founded upon natural equity, and a good education is the best curb for the chiefs of Nations. This curb can never exist, whilst a part of fociety, who are all EQUAL in their natural rights, is fuffered to enjoy flupid and partial privileges, it is upon the immutable basis of LIBERTY, EQUALITY, and FRATERNITY, that men must found this curb to an ambition, destructive of their happiness.

lively passions blind us to every thing which are not their object; the terrors of the future life, of which our passions have always the secret to diminish to us the probability, can be able to effect nothing upon the wicked man, who does not fear even the much nearer punishments of the law, and the assured hatred of those beings that surround him. All men who deliver themselves up to crime, see nothing certain but the advantage that attends the crime; the rest always appear to them salse or problematical.

If for a little, we would open our eyes, we should see, that we must not reckon upon the fear of an avenging God and of his chastisement, which our felf-love never shew us, but as pacified in the long-run, being able to essect any thing upon hearts hardened in crime. Him, who has arrived at persuading himself that he cannot be happy without crime, will always deliver himself up to crime, notwithstanding the menaces of religion: whoever is sufficiently blinded not to read his infamy in his own heart, his own condemnation in the counterval.

nances of those beings who furround him, the indignation and the anger in the eyes of the judges established to punish the offences that he may commit, fuch a man I fay, will never fee the impressions that his crimes shall make upon the countenance of a judge that is hidden from him, or that he only fees at a distance. The tyrant who with a dry eye can be able to hear the cries and fee flow the tears of a whole people of whom he causes the mifery, will not fee the inflamed eyes of a more powerful mafter. When an haughty and arrogant monarch, pretends to be accountable to God alone for his actions, it is because he fears more his nation than his God.

But on the other hand religion itself, does it not annihilate the effects of those fears which it announces as falutary? Does it not furnish to its disciples the means of extricating themselves from the punishment with which it has so frequently menaced them? Does it not tell them that a sterile repentance can be able at the moment of death to disarm the celestial wrath, and purify

purify the filthy fouls of finners? In fome fuperstitions do not the priests arrogate to themselves the right of remitting to the dying the crimes that they have committed during the course of a disorderly life? In short, do not the most perverse men, encouraged in iniquity, in debauchery, and crime, reckon even to the last moment upon the assistance of a religion that promises them the infallible means of reconciling themselves with the God whom they have irritated, and of avoiding his rigorous punishments?

In consequence of these notions, so favourable for the wicked, so suitable to tranquillize them, we see that the hope of an easy expiation, far from correcting them, engages them to persist until death, in the most crying disorders. Indeed, in despite of the numberless advantages which they assure us slows from the doctrine of another life, in despite of its pretended efficacy to repress the passions of men, the ministers of religion, so interested in the maintenance of this system, do they not themselves complain every day of its insuffi-

Y 2

ciency?

ciency? they acknowledge that the mor tals whom they have imbued, from their infancy with these ideas, are not less drawn along by their propensities—stunned by dissipation—slaves of their pleafures—captivated by habit—driven by the torrent of the world—seduced by present interest that makes them forget equally the recompences and the chastisements of a future life. In a word the ministers of Heaven allow that their disciples, for the greater part, conduct themselves in this world as if they had nothing to hope or fear in another.

In short, let us suppose for an instant that the doctrine of another life was of some utility, and that it really restrained a small number of individuals; what are these feeble advantages compared to the multitude of evils that we see flow from it! Against one timid man that this idea restrains, there are millions that it cannot be able to restrain; there are millions that it renders irrational, savage, fanatic, use-less and wicked; there are millions that it disturbs and diverts from their duties towards

towards fociety; there is an infinity that it afflicts and that it troubles, without procuring any real good for their affociates.*

* Many people, persuaded of the utility of the doctrine of another life, look upon those, who dare combat it, as the enemies of society. Nevertheless, it is easy to convince ourselves, that the most enlightened and wisest men of antiquity, have believed, not only that the Soul was material and perishes with the body, but again have attacked without subterfuge, the opinion of suture punishments. This sentiment was not peculiar to the EPICUREANS, we see it adopted by the philosophers of all sects, by PYTHAGOREANS, by the STOICS, in short, by the most godly, and the most virtuous men of GREECE and of ROME. Here is the manner in which OVID makes PYTHAGORAS speak.

O Genus atonitum Gelidæ formidine Mortis, Quid styga, quid tenebras, & nomina vana timetis Materiem Vatum, falsi que pericula mundi?

TIMÆUS OF LOCRIS, who was a Pythagorean, allows that the doctrine of future punshments, was fabulous, folely destined for the imbecility of the uninformed, and but little calculated for those, who cultivate their reafon.

ARISTOTLE says formally, that man has neither good to hope, nor evil to fear after death.

In the fystem of the PLATONISTS, who made the Soul immortal, they could not be able to have punishments to

fear after death, feeing that this Soul returned then to rejoin itself to the Divinity, of whom it was a portion: now a portion of the Divinity, could not be able to be subjected to suffer.

CICERO fays of ZENO, that he supposed the Soul to be of a fiery substance, from whence he concludes, that it must destroy itself. Zenoni Stoico animus ignis videtur. Si sit ignis extinguetur; interibit cum reliquo corpore.

This philosophical orator, who was of the sect of ACADEMICS, is not always in accord with himself; nevertheless, on many occasions, he treats openly as fables, the torments of hell, and looks upon death as the end of every thing for man. VIDE TUSCULAN: I. C. 38.

SENECA is filled with passages, in which he makes us look upon death, as a flate of total annihilation. Mors est non esse. Id quale sit jam scio; boc erit post me quod ante me fuit. Si quid in bac re tormenti est, necesse est & fuisse antequam prodiremus in lucem; atqui nullam fensimus tunc vexationem. In speaking of the death of his brother, he fays, quid itaque ejus desiderio maceror, qui aut beatus, aut nullus est? But nothing is more decisive, than what SENECA writes to MARCIA to confole him. (chap. 19.) Cogita nullis defunctum males affici: illa quæ nobis inferos faciunt terribiles, fabulam esse: nullas imminere mortuis tenebras, nec carcerem, nec flumina flagrantia igne, nec oblivionis amnem, nec tribunalia, & reos & in illa libertate tam laxa iterum tyrannos: luserunt ista poëtæ & vanis nos agitavere terroribus. Mors omnium dolorum & folutio eft & finis: ultra quam mala nostra non exeunt, quæ nos in illam tranquillitatem, in qua antequam nasceremur, jacuimus, reponit,

In short, here is a passage very decisive of this philosophy, it merits well the attention of the reader. Si animus fortuita contempsit; si deorum hominumque formidinem ejecit, & scit non multum ab homine timendum, a deo nihil; si contemptor omnium quibus torquetur vita eo perductus est ut illi liqueat mortem nullius mali esse materiam, multorum sinem. V. De Beneficiis vii. i.

SENECA, the Tragedian, explains himself in the same manner as the philosopher.

Post mortem nihil est, ipsaque mors nihil.
Velocis spatii meta novissima.
Quæris quo jaceas post obitum loco?
Quo non nata jacent.
Mors individua est noxia corpori,
Nec parcens animæ.

TROADES.

EPICTETUS has the fame ideas in a passage very worthy of remark, reported by ARRIAN, here it is faithfully translated. "But where are you going? It cannot be into "a place of sufferings; you will only return to the place from whence you came; you are going to be again peaceably associated with the elements from whence you have parted. That, which in your composition, is of the nature of fire, will return to the element of fire; that which is of the nature of earth, is going to rejoin itself to the earth; that which is "air, is going to re-unite itself to air; that which is "water, is going to resolve itself into water; there is "no hell, nor acheron, nor cocytus, nor phlege-"thon. Y. Arrian in Epist. Lib. III. Chap. 13."

In another place, the fame philosopher fays, " the hour " of death approaches; but do not aggravate your evils,

" nor render things worse than they are: represent

" them to yourfelf, under their true point of view.

"The time is come, when the materials of which you

" are composed, go to resolve themselves into the

" elements from whence they were originally borrowed.

What is there that is terrible or grievous in that?

" Is there any thing in the world, that perishes to-

" tally?" VID: ARRIAN.LIB.IV.CHAP. 7 \ 1.

In-fhort the fage and pious Antoninus fays, "He

" who fears death either fears to be deprived of all feel-

" ing, or fears to experience different fensations. If

" If you lose all feeling, you will no longer be sub-

" ject to pains and to mifery. If you are provided

" with other fenses of a different Nature, you will be-

"come a creature of a different species." This great Emperor says beside that we much expect death with tranquillity, seeing that it is only the dissolution of the elements of which each animal is composed. See the MORAL REFLECTIONS OF MARCUS ANTONINUS, BOOK II. § 17, AND BOOK VIII. § 58.

We can be able to join to the evidence of so many great men of PAGAN ANTIQUITY, that of the author of ECCLESIASTICUS, who speaks of death, and of the condition of the human Soul, like an EPICUREAN.

Unus interitas est hominis & jumentorum, & æqua utriusque conditie: sicut moritur homo, sic & illa moriuntur: similiter spirant omnia & nihil habet homo jumento amplius. See

ECCLESIASTICUS, CHAP. III. VERSE 19.

In fhort, how can the CHRISTIANS be able to reconcile the utility or the necessity of the doctrine of another life, with the profound silence, that the legislator of the JEWS, inspired by the Divinity, has kept upon an article, that they believe so important.



CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

EDUCATION, MORALS AND THE LAWS SUFFICE TO REFRAIN MEN. OF THE DESIRE OF IMMORTALITY; OF SUICIDE.

It is not then in an ideal world, which exists no where but in the imaginations of men, that we must seek to draw together those motives which make them act in this; it is in the visible world that we shall find the motive-powers to divert them from crime, and to excite them to virtue. It is in Nature, in experience, in truth that we must search the remedies for the evils of our species, and for motive-powers suitable to give the human heart propensities truly useful to the good of society.

If they have paid attention to what has been faid in the course of this work, they will fee that it is, above all, EDUCA-TION that will be able to furnish the true means of rectifying our wanderings It is this that ought to and mistakes. fcatter feeds in our hearts; cultivate the young shoots that it shall have thrown into them; make a profitable use of the difpositions and of the faculties that depend on their different organization; cherish the fire of the imagination, kindle it for certain objects, choak it and extinguish it for others, in short, make fouls contract habits that are advantageous for the individual and for fociety. Brought up in this manner, men would not have occasion for any celestial rewards, to know the value of virtue; they would not have occafion to fee burning gulphs under their feet to feel horror for crime; Nature without these fables will teach them much better what they owe to themselves, and the law will shew them what they owe to the body of which they are members. It is thus that education will form citizens to the state; the depositaries of power will distinguish those that education shall have formed, by reason of the advantages that they shall procure to the country; they will punish those who shall be injurious to it; it will make the citizens see that the promises which education and morals have made are by no means vain, and that in a state well constituted, virtue and talents are the road to happiness, and that inutility or crime conduct them to missortune and to contempt.

A government just, enlightened, virtuous, vigilant, who shall honestly propose the public good, has no occasion for fables or for falshoods to govern reasonable subjects, it will blush to make use of imposture to deceive citizens, instructed in their duties, submitted through interest to equitable laws, capable of feeling the benefit that they are willing to confer on them; it will know that the public esteem has more power over men of elevated minds, than the terror of the laws; it will know that habit is sufficient to inspire them with horror, even for those concealed crimes that est-

cape the eyes of fociety; it will know that the visible punishments of this world impose much more upon the generality of men, than those of an uncertain and distant futurity; in short, it will know that the sensible benefits of which the sovereign power is in possession to distribute, touch the imagination of mortals much more, than those vague recompenses which they promise them in a future life.

Men are every where fo wicked, fo corrupted, fo rebellious to reason, only because they are no where governed conformably to their Nature, nor instructed in her necessary laws. Every where they feed them with ufeless chimeras; every where they are fubmitted to masters who neglect the instruction of the people, or who only feek to deceive them. We only fee, on the face of this globe, fovereigns, unjust, incapable, enervated by luxury, corrupted by stattery, depraved by licentiousness and impunity, devoid of talents, of morals and of virtue; indifferent upon their duties, of which frequently they are ignorant; they are but little occupied with the wellbeing

being of their people; their attention is abforbed by ufeless wars, or by the desire of finding at each moment the means of fatisfying their infatiable appetites; their mind does not employ itself upon those objects the most important to the happiness of their states. Interested in maintaining the received prejudices, they take no care to consider of the means of curing them; in short, deprived themselves of the understanding that makes man know that his interest is to be good, just, virtuous, they ordinarily recompense only those crimes that are useful to them, and punish the virtues that are contrary to their imprudent passions. Under such masters is it then furprifing that focieties should be ravaged by perverse men, who oppress in emulation of each other those weak beings who would be willing to imitate them? The state of society is a state of war, of the fovereign against the whole, and of each of its members the one against the other.*

^{*} It must be observed here that I do not say, like HOBBES, that the state of Nature is a state of war, I say

Man is wicked not because he is born wicked, but because they render him such; the great, the powerful, crush with impunity the indigent, the unhappy, and these at the risque of their lives, seek to render them back all the evil that they have received; they attack either openly or in secret a country who is a step-mother, that gives all to some of her children, and takes away every thing from others; they punish it for its partiality, and shew it clearly that the motive-powers borrowed from another life are impotent against the passions and the fury that a corrupted administra-

that men by their Nature, are neither good nor wicked, they are equally disposed to become good or wicked according as they are modified, or according as they are made to find their interest to be one or the other. Men are so disposed to injure each other only because every thing conspires to divide their interests; each lives, to say thus, isolated in society, and their chief's prosit by their divisions to subjugate them one by the other. Divide & impera is the maxim that all bad governments sollow by instinct. Tyrants would not find their account if they had only under their orders virtuous men.

tion has given birth to in them, and that the terror of the punishments of this world are themselves too feeble against necessity, against the criminal habits, against a dangerous organization, that education has not rectified.

In all countries the morals of the people is totally neglected, and the government is occupied only with the care of rendering them timid and miferable. Man is almost every where a slave, it must then be of necessity that he is base, interested, diffimulating, without honor, in a word that he has the vices of his state. Every where they deceive him-they encourage him in ignorance-they prevent him from cultivating his reason; it must be then that he is every where flupid, irrational and wicked; every where he fees that vice and crime are honoured; he concludes from thence that vice is a good and that virtue can be only able to be a facrifice of himself. Every where he is miserable, thus every where he injures his fellow men to draw himfelf out of pain; in vain to restrain him they shew him heaven, his views

views prefently defcend again upon the earth; he is willing to be happy at any price, and the laws which have not provided neither for his instruction, nor for his manners, nor for his happiness,, menace him uselessly, and punish him for the unjust negligence of the legislators. If politics, more enlightened itself, did feriously occupy itself with the instruction and with the well-being of a people; if the laws were more equitable; if each fociety, less partial, did bestow on each of its members the care, the education, and the affistance which they have a right to exact: if the government, less covetous and more vigilant, did propose to render their subjects more happy, we should not see such a great number of malefactors, of robbers, of murderers, infest society; it would not be obliged to take away their lives to punish them for that wickedness which is due ordinarily only to the vices of its institutions: it would not be necessary to feek in another life for chimeras always obliged to prove abortive against their passions and their real wants. In short, if the people were more inftructed and more happy, po-VOL. II. Aa litics

Jitics would no longer be under the exigency of deceiving them for to restrain them, nor to destroy so many unfortunates for having procured necessaries at the expence of the superfluities of their hard hearted fellowcitizens.

When we shall be willing to enlighten man, let us always shew him the truth. In the place of kindling his imagination by the idea of those pretended benefits that a future life has in referve for him, let them solace him, let them fuccour him, or at least, let them permit him to enjoy the fruit of his labour; let them not ravilh from him his substance by cruel imposts; let them not discourage him from work; let them not force him into that laziness that will induce him to crime. Let him confider his prefent existence, without carrying his views to that which will attend him after his death. Let them excite his industry; let them reward his talents; let them render him active, laborious, beneficent, and virtuous, in this world which he inhabits; let them shew him that his actions can be able to have an influence on his fellow men, and not upon imaginary be-

ings

Let them not talk to him of the tortures with which the Divinity menaces him at the time when he shall be no more; let them make him see society armed against those who disturb it; let them shew him the consequences of the hatred of his affociates; let him learn to feel the value of their affection; let him learn to esteem himself; let him have the ambition to merit the esteem of others: let him learn that to obtain it he must have virtue, and that the virtuous man, in a society well constituted, has nothing to fear neither from men nor from gods.

If we are willing to form citizens, honest, courageous, industrious, useful to their country, let us beware of inspiring them from their infancy with ill-founded sears of death; do not let us amuse their imagination with marvellous sables; do not let us occupy their minds with a future life, useless to be known, and which has nothing in common with their real selicity. Let us speak of immortality to courageous and noble souls; let us shew it as the price of

their labours to those energetic minds, who, springing forward beyond the bounds of their actual existence, and but little satisfied with exciting the admiration and the love of their contemporaries, are willing also to wrest the homage of suture races. Indeed, it is an immortality to which genius talents, virtue have a right to pretend; do not let us blame nor stifle a noble passion, founded upon our nature, and from which society gathers the most advantageous fruits.

The idea of being, after our death, buried in total oblivion; of having nothing in common with the beings of our species; of losing all possibility of again having an influence upon them, is a thought painful to all men; it is above all very afflicting for those who have a fiery imagination. The desire of immortality, or of living in the memory of men, was always the passion of great souls; it was the motive-power of the actions of all those who have played a great part on the earth. Heroes, whether virtuous or criminal, Philosophers, as well as conquerors, men of genius and men of talents;

talents; those sublime personages who have done honour to their species, as well as those illustrious villains that have debased and ravaged it, have had an eye to posterity in all their enterprises, and flattered themselves with the hope of acting upon the fouls of men, when they themselves should no longer exist. If man in general does not carry his views fo far, he is at least fensible of the idea of feeing himfelf regenerated in his children, whom he knows destined to survive him, to transmit his name, to preserve his memory, to reprefent him in fociety; it is for them that he rebuilds his cottage; it is for them that he plants a tree which he will never fee in its vigour; it is that they may be happy that he labours. The forrow that troubles those great men, frequently fo useless to the world, when they have lost the hope of continuing their race, has its fource only in the fear of being entirely forgotten. They feel that the ufeless man dies entirely. The idea that their name will be in the mouths of men; the thought that it will be pronounced with tenderness and kindness; that it will excite in their hearts Aaa favourable favourable sentiments, are illusions useful and fuitable to flatter even those who know that there will not refult any thing for them. Man pleases himself with dreaming he shall have power; that he will pass for something in the universe, even after the term of his human existence; he partakes in idea in the actions, in the projects, in the difcourfes of future races, and would be extremely unhappy if he believed himself excluded from their fociety. The laws in almost all countries have entered into these views; they have been willing to confole the citizens for the necessity of dying, by giving them the means of exercifing their will even for a long time after their death. This condescention goes fo far, that the dead frequently regulate the condition of the living during a long feries of years.

Every thing proves to us in man the defire of furviving himself: PYRAMIDS, MAU-SOLEUMS, MONUMENTS, EPITAPHS; every thing shews us that he is willing to prolong his existence even beyond his decease. He is not insensible to the judgment of posterity; it is for them that the philosopher writes;

writes; it is to aftonish them that the monarch erects edifices; they are their praises and commendations that the great man already hears echo in his ears; it is to them that the virtuous citizen appeals from his unjust or prejudiced contemporaries. Happy chimera! Illusion so mild, that it realizes itself to ardent imaginations, and finds itself suitable to give birth to, and fustain the enthusiasm of genius, courage, grandeur of foul, talents, and can fometimes be able to restrain the excesses of the most powerful men; frequently very much disquieted for the judgment of posterity; because they know that, sooner or later, they will avenge the living of the unjust evils which they shall have made them fuffer.

No man, then, can be able to confent to be totally effaced from the remembrance of his fellow men; few men have the courage to place themselves above the judgments of the future human species, and to degrade himself in their eyes. Who is the being infensible to the pleasure of wresting the tears of those who shall survive him, of again

Aa4

acting

acting upon their fouls; of occupying their thoughts; of exercifing upon them his power even from the bottom of the grave! Let us then impose eternal filence upon those superstitious melancholly men, who have the audacity to cenfure a fentiment from which there refults fo many advantages to fociety; let us not liften to those indifferent philosophers, who are willing that we should stifle this great spring of our souls; let us not be feduced by the farcasms of those voluptuaries, who, despise an immortality, towards which they have no power to fet forward. The defire of pleafing posterity, and of rendering his name agreeable to races to come, is a respectable motive-power, when it causes those things to be undertaken of which the utility can be able to have an influence upon men, and upon nations, who yet have not an existence. Let us not treat as irrational the enthusiasm of those mighty geniuses and beneficent beings, whose penetrating regards have foreseen us in their days; who have occupied themfelves for us; who have defired our fuffrages; who have written for us; who have enriched

enriched us by their discoveries; who have cured us of our errors. Let us render them that homage which they have expected of us. when their unjust contemporaries have refused it to them. Let us, at least, pay to their ashes a tribute of recollection, for the pleafures and benefits that they have procured for us. Let us sprinkle with our tears the urns of Socrates, of Phocion; let us wash out the stain that their punishment has made on the human species; let us expiate by our regret the Athenian ingratitude; let us learn by their example to dread religious and political fanatacism; and let us fear to persecute merit and virtue, in perfecuting those who combat our prejudices.

Let us strew flowers over the tombs of an Homer, of a Tasso, of a Milton; let us revere the immortal shades of those happy geniuses, whose songs yet excite in our souls the most tender sentiments. Let us bless the memory of all those benefactors of the people, who were the delight of the human species; let us adore the virtues of a Titus, of a Trajan, of an Antoninus, and of a Jit-

LIAN; let us merit, in our sphere, the eulogies of future ages; and let us always remember, that to carry with us to the grave the regret of our fellow men, we must shew them talents and virtues. The funeral ceremonies of the most powerful monarchs have rarely been wetted with the tears of the people, they have commonly drained them while living. The names of tyrants excite the horror of those who hear them pronounced. Tremble then, cruel kings, who plunge your fubjects in mifery and in tears, who ravage nations, who change the earth into a barren church-yard; tremble for the bloody traits under which the irritated historian will paint you to future generations; neither your fumptuous monuments, nor your imposing victories, nor your innumerable armies, will prevent posterity from insulting your odious manes, and of avenging their grandfathers of your transcendant crimes!

Not only all men foresee their dissolution with pain, but again they wish their death may be an interesting event for others. But as we have said, we must have talents, beneficence, virtue, in order that those who sur

round

round us may interest themselves in our condition, and give regret to our ashes. Is it then furprifing if the greater number of men occupied entirely with themselves, with their vanity, with their puerile projects, with the care of fatisfying their passions, at the expence of the content and the wants of a wife. of a family, of their children, of their friends, of fociety, do not excite any regret by their death, or may be prefently forgotten. There is an infinity of monarchs of which hiftory does not tell us any thing, fave that they have lived. In despite of the inutility in which men for the most part live, the little care that they take to render themselves dear to those beings that environ them, the actions even that they commit to displease them, it does not prevent the felf-love of each mortal, from perfuading him that his death must be an interesting event, and from shewing him, to fay thus, the order of things overturned by his decease. Man feeble and vain! dost thou not fee that the SESOSTRIS, the ALEXANDERS, the CÆSARS, are dead? The course of the universe is not arrested by that; the death of these famous conquerors, afflicting flicting for some favoured flaves, was a subject of joy for the whole human species! it gave at least to nations the hope of respiring. Dost thou believe that thy talents ought to interest the human race, and put it in mourning at thy death? Alas! the Cor-NEILLES, the Lockes, the Newtons, the BAYLES, the Montesquieus are dead, regretted by a small number of friends, who prefently have confoled themselves by their necessary avocations; their death was indifferent to the greater number of their fellowcitizens. Darest thou flatter thyself that thy reputation, thy titles, thy riches, thy fumptuous repasts, thy diversified pleasures, will make of thy death a memorable event? They will speak of it during two days, and do not be at all furprised; learn that there has died in former ages at BABYLON, at SARDIS, at CARTHAGE, and in Rome, a multitude of citizens, more illustrious, more powerful, more opulent, more voluptuous, than thou, of whom, however, no one has taken care to transmit to thee the names. Be then virtuous, O man! in whatever flation deftiny affigns thee, thou shalt be happy in thy lifelifetime; do thou good and thou shalt be cherished; acquire talents and thou shalt be respected; posterity shall admire thee, if these talents, useful for them, shall make them know the name under which they formerly designated thy annihilated being. But the universe shall not be disturbed by thy loss; and when thou diest thy nearest neighbour shall perhaps be silled with joy, whilst thy wise, thy children, thy friends shall be occupied with the melancholy care of closing thine eyes.

Do not then let us occupy ourselves with our condition to come, but to render ourselves useful to those with whom we live; let us render ourselves for our own peculiar happiness agreeable to our parents, to our children, to our relations, to our friends, to our servants; let us render ourselves estimable in the eyes of our fellow-citizens; let us faithfully serve a country which assures to us our well-being; let the desire of pleasing posterity excite in us those labours that shall wrest from it its eulogies; let a legitimate love for ourselves make us taste in advance the commendations

that we are willing to merit; and when we are worthy of it, let us learn to love our-felves, to estimate ourselves; let us never consent that concealed vices, that secret crimes shall degrade us in our own eyes, and oblige us to be ashamed of ourselves.

Thus disposed, let us look upon our decease with the same indifference that it will be looked upon by the greater number of men; let us expect death with constancy; let us learn to deliver ourselves from those vain terrors with which they are willing to overwhelm us; let us leave to the enthusiast his vague hopes; let us leave to the superstitious those scars with which he nourishes his melancholy; but let hearts strengthened by reason no longer dread a death that shall destroy all feeling.

Whatever may be the attachment that men have for the, and their fear for death, we every day fee that habit, opinion, prejudice, are funciently powerful to annihilate these passions in us, to make us brave dangers and to lizard our existence. Ambition, pride, variety, averice, love, jealousy, the define of glora, that descrence for opi-

nion

nion which they decorate with the name of a POINT OF HONOUR, are sufficient to make us thut our eyes to danger, and to push us on to death. Vexation, anxiety of mind, difgrace, want of fuccels, folten to us its features fo revolting, and makes us look upon it as a door that can be able to give us shelter from the injustice of our fellow-men Indigence, trouble, advertity, familiarizes us with this death fo terrible to the happy. The poor, condemned to labour, and deprived of the comforts of life, fees it come with indifference; the unfortunate when he is unhappy without resource, embraces it in his despair, he accelerates its march as soon as he fees that happiness is no longer made for him.

Men in different ages and in different countries have formed judgments extremely varied upon those who have had the courage to put themselves to death. Their ideas upon this subject, as upon all others, have been modified by their political and religious institutions. The GREEKS, the ROMANS, and the other nations, that every thing conspired to render courageous and magnani-

mons

mous, regarded as heroes and as gods those who voluntarily cut their thread of life. The BRAMIN knows yet in INDOSTAN how to give even to women sufficient fortitude to burn themselves upon the dead bodies of their husbands. The JAPANESE, upon the most trisling subject, makes no kind of difficulty in plunging a dagger into his bosom.

Amongst the people of our country religion renders men less prodigal of their lives; it teaches them that their God is willing they should suffer, and that he is pleased with their forments, consenting readily that they may labour to destroy themselves in detail, that they may by this means perpetuate their tortures, but he cannot be able to approve that they should cut all at once the thread of their days, or disposses themselves of the site that he has given them.

Some moralists abstracting the height of religious ideas, have believed that it was never permitted to man to break the engineer of the covenant that he has made with the is covardice; they have thought that it was weakness and pusillanimity to suffer

fuffer himself to be overwhelmed with the shafts of his destiny, and they have pretended that there would be much more courage and elevation of soul in supporting his afflictions and resisting the blows of sate.

If we confult Nature upon this, we shall see that all the actions of men, these feeble playthings in the hands of necessity, are indifpensable and depend on a cause that moves them without their knowledge, in despite of them, and who makes them accomplish, at each instant, some one of its decrees. If the same power that obliges all intelligent beings to cherish their existence, renders that of a man fo painful and fo cruel that he finds it odious and insupportable, he quits his species, order is destroyed for him, and in depriving himself of life he accomplishes a decree of Nature, who is willing that he should no longer exist. This Nature has laboured during thousands of years to form in the bowels of the earth the iron that must determine his days.

If we examine the relation of man with Nature, we shall see that his engagements Vol. II. Bb were were neither voluntary on the part of the last, nor reciprocal on the part of Nature or of its author. The will of man had not any part in his birth; it is commonly against his will that he is obliged to finish it, and his actions are, as we have proved, only the necessary effects of unknown causes, which determine his will. He is in the hands of Nature that which a fword is in his own hands; he can be able to fall upon it without our being able to accuse him with breaking his engagements, or of stamping with ingratitude him who holds it. Man can only be able to love his being on the condition of his being happy; as foon as the entire of Nature refuses him happiness: as foon as all that which furrounds him becomes incommodious to him; as foon as his melancholy ideas offer nothing but afflicting pictures to his imagination, he can be able to quit a rank that no longer fuits him, fince he finds in it no one interest or protection. he already exists no longer; he is suspended in the void; he can be able to be useful neither to himfelf nor to others.

If we consider the covenant that unites

man to fociety, we shall see that every covenant is conditional and reciprocal, that is to fay, fuppofes mutual advantages between the contracting parties. The citizen cannot be able to be bound to his country, to his affociates, but by the bonds of happiness; these bonds are they cut? he is restored to liberty. Society, or those who represent it, do they treat him with harshness, with injustice, and do they render his existence painful? Indigence and difgrace, do they menace him amongst a scornful and obdurate world? Perfidious friends, do they forfake him in adverfity? An unfaithful wife, does she outrage his heart? Rebellious and ungrateful children, do they afflict his old age? Has he placed his happiness exclusively in some obsect that it is impossible for him to procure? In short, for whatever cause it may be, chagrin, remorfe, melancholy, defpair, have they disfigured for him the spectacle of the universe? If he cannot be able to support his evils, let him quit a world, which from thenceforth is for him only a frightful defart; let him remove himself for ever from an inhuman country that is no longer willing to Bb2 reckon reckon him amongst the number of her children; let him quit an house that threatens to tumble on his head; let him renounce that fociety to the happiness of which he can no longer labour, and which his own peculiar happiness alone can render dear to him. Could we blame a man, who, finding himfelf ufeless and without resources in the town where deftiny gave him birth, should in his chagrin go and plunge himself in solitude? Well, then, what right have we to cenfure him who kills himfelf in defpair? The man who dies, does he do any thing elfe than isolate himself? Death is the only remedy for despair; it is then that the sword is the only friend, the only comforter that remains to the unhappy; as long as hope remains with him, as long as his evils appear to him fupportable, as long as he flatters himfelf with feeing them one day have an end, as long as he finds fome comfort in existence, he will not confent to deprive himself of life; but when nothing any longer fustains in him the love of his Being, to live is the greatest of all evils, and to die is the duty of him who would withdraw himself from them.*

A fociety who cannot be able, or who is not willing to procure us any one benefit, lofes all its rights over us; a Nature who perfifts in rendering our existence unhappy, orders us to quit it; in dying, we fulfil one of its decrees, as well as we have done in entering into life. For him who consents to die, there is no evil without a remedy; for him who refuses to die, there is yet benefits that attach him to the world. In this cafe, let him rally his powers, and let him oppose to a deftiny that oppresses him, the courage and the refources that Nature yet furnishes him; fhe has not totally abandoned him whilst the leaves him the fensation of pleasure and the hope of feeing the end of his pains. When to the fuperstitious there is no period to his fufferings, it is not permitted him to

V. SENEC. EPIST. XII.

^{*} Malum est in necessitate vivere: sed in necessitate vivere, necessitas nulla est. Quidni nulla sit? Patent undique ad libertatem viæ multæ, breves, faciles. Agamus Deo gratias, quod nemo, in vita teneri possit.

dream of abridging them.* His religion commands him to continue to groan; it defends him from recurring to death, which would only be to him the entrance into a miserable existence, he would be eternally punished for having dared to anticipate the dilatory commands of a cruel God, who pleases himself with seeing him reduced to despair, and who is not willing that man should have the audacity to quit, without his consent, the post that is assigned to him.

Men regulate their judgments only upon their peculiar modes of feeling; they call folly or delirium those violent actions which they believed but little proportioned to their causes, or which appear to deprive them of

* CHRISTIANITY, and the civil laws of Christians, in censuring suicide are very inconclusive. The Old Testament surnishes examples in sampson, eleazar, that is to say, in men very agreeable to God. The Messiah, or the Son of God, of the Christians, if it be true that he died with his own free consent, was evidently a suicide. We can say as much of a great number of martyrs, who have voluntarily presented themselves to punishment, as well as of penitents who have made a merit of destroying themselves by little and little.

that happiness towards which they suppose a being in the enjoyment of his fenses cannot be able to cease tending; we treat him as a weak man when we fee him affected with that which touches us but lightly, or when he is incapable of supporting the evils which we flatter ourselves we should be able to bear with more fortitude than he does. We accufe of folly, of fury, of phrenfy, whoever deprives himself of life, which we regard indiffinctly as the greatest of benefits, for objects that appear to us not to merit fo dear a facrifice. It is thus that we always erect ourselves into judges of the happiness, of the mode of feeing and feeling of others; a miser who kills himself after the loss of his treasure, appears a fool in the eyes of him who is less attached to riches; he does not feel that without money, life is only a continued torture for a mifer, and that nothing in this world can be able to divert him from his pain; he will tell you that in his place he had not done as much; but to be exactly in the place of another man, it were needful to have his organization, his temperament, his passions, his ideas; it would be needful B b 4

needful to be him and to be placed in the same circumstances, to be moved by the same causes, and in this case all men like the miser, would take away their life, after having lost the only source of their happiness.

He who deprives himself of his life does not carry himself to this extremity, so contrary to his natural tendency, but when nothing in this world is capable of rejoicing him, or of diverting his affliction. misfortune, whatever it may be, is real for him; his organization, strong or weak, is his own and not that of another; a man fick in imagination really fuffers confiderably, and troublesome dreams place us very truly in an incommodious position. Thus, as foon as a man kills himself, we ought to conclude, that life, in the place of being a benefit, has become a very great evil to him; that existence has lost all its charms in his eyes; that the entire of Nature has no longer any thing that seduces him; that this Nature is without charms for him, and that after the comparison, which his troubled imagination makes of existence with non-existence; this appears to him preferable to the first.

Many persons will not fail to look upon these maxims as dangerous, which, against the received prejudices, authorize the unhappy to cut their thread of life: but thefe are not the maxims which determine men to take fuch a violent refolution; it is a temperament foured by chagrin; it is a bilious and melancholly constitution; it is a defect in the organization; it is a derangement in the machine; it is necessity, and not reafonable speculations, that breed in man the defign of destroying himself. Nothing invites him to this step, so long as reason remains with him, or whilft he yet has any hope, this fovereign balm for all evils; as for the unfortunate who cannot be able to lose fight of his forrows and his pains, who has always his evils prefent to his mind, he is obliged to take countel from them alone. Befide, what advantage or what affiftance can fociety promife itself from a miferable wretch reduced to despair, from a misanthrope overwhelmed with his grief, tormented with remorfe, who has no longer any motives to render himfelf uleful to others. who has abandoned himself, and finds no more interest in preserving his life? This fociety,

fociety, would it not be more happy, if it could arrive at perfuading the wicked to take away from before our eyes these incommodious objects, and which the laws, in their default, are obliged to destroy? These wicked men, would they not be more happy, if they anticipated the disgrace and the punishment that is destined for them.

Life being commonly for man the greatest of all benefits, it is to be presumed, that he who deprives himself of it is impelled to it by an invincible force. It is the excess of misery, despair, the derangement of the machine, caused by melancholy that carries man on to destroy himself. Agitated then by contrary impulsions, he is, as we have before said, obliged to follow a middle course that conducts him to his death; if man is not free in any one instant of his life, he is again much less so in the act by which it is terminated.*

We see then, that he who kills himself

^{*} Suicide is, they fay, very common in England, of which the climate inclines the inhabitants to melancholy. Those who kill themselves in that country are qualified for LUNATICS; their disease does not appear to be more blameable than the ecstacy of the brain.

does not commit, as they pretend, an outrage on Nature, or, if they will, to its author. He follows an impulsion of this Nature, in taking the only means that she leaves him to quit his pains; he goes out of existence by a door that she leaves open to him; he cannot be able to offend her in accomplishing the law of necessity; the iron hand of this having broken the fpring that rendered life desirable to him, and which urged him to conserve himself, shews him that he ought to quit a rank or a system where he finds himself too bad to be willing to remain in it. His country, or his family, have no right to complain of a member that it cannot be able to render happy, and from whom it has nothing more to hope for itself. To be useful to his country, or to his family, it is necessary that man should cherish his own peculiar existence, that he has an interest in conserving himself, loves the bonds which unite him to others, is capable of occupying himfelf with their felicity. In short, that the fuicide should be punished in the other life, and repent of his precipitate steps, it were needful that he should outlive himfelf, and that in confequence he carried carried with him, into his future refidence, his organs, his fenses, his memory, his ideas, his actual mode of existing and of thinking.

In short, nothing is more useful than to inspire men with a contempt for death, and to banish from their minds the false ideas that they give them of its consequences. The fear of death will never make any thing but cowards; the fear of its pretended confequences will make nothing but fanatics, or pious melancholy beings, ufeless to themfelves and to others. Death is a refource that we must not by any means take away from oppressed virtue, which the injustice of men frequently reduces to despair. If men feared death less, they would neither be flaves nor superstitious. Truth would find defenders more zealous; the rights of man would be more hardily fustained; error would be more powerfully combated, and tyranny would be for ever banished from nations; cowardice nourishes it, and fear perpetuates it. In short, men can neither be contented nor happy whilft their opinions shall oblige them to TREMBLE!!!

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

OF THE INTERESTS OF MEN, OR OF THE IDEAS THAT THEY FORM TO THEMSELVES OF HAPPINESS.—MAN CANNOT BE ABLE TO BE HAPPY WITHOUT VIRTUE.

UTILITY, as we have faid elsewhere, ought to be the only standard of the judgment of men. To be useful, is to contribute to the happiness of his fellow creatures; to be prejudicial, is to contribute to their misery. This granted, let us see if the principles that we have established hitherto are advantageous or prejudicial, useful or useless, to the beings of the human species. If man seeks after his happiness in every instant of his life, he can only approve of that which procures him, or surnishes him with the means of obtaining it.

What we have before faid, has already been able to ferve us in fixing our ideas upon that which constitutes happiness: we

have

have already shewn that this happiness is only continued pleafure; * but in order that an object may please us, it is necessary that the impressions which it makes upon us, the perceptions which it gives us, the ideas which it leaves us, in short, that the motion which it excites in us, may be analogous to our organization, to our temperament, to our individual nature, modified by habit, and by an infinity of circumstances, or causes that give us modes of being more or less permanent or transitory: it is necessary that the action of the object which moves us, or of which the idea remains with us, far from enfeebling it or annihilating it, should always tend to augment it: it is necessary that without fatiguing, exhausting, or deranging our organs, this object gives to our machine that degree of activity of which it has continually occasion. What is the object that reunites all these qualities? Who is the man of whom the organs are susceptible of a continual agitation, without finking, without being fatigued, without experiencing a painful fenfation? Man

^{*} See CHAPTER THE NINTH.

t

d

5,

15

h

h

is

t-

ct

ty

at

i-

ns

h-

1-

in

18

is always willing to be warned of his existence in the most lively manner possible, as long as he can be so without pain. What do I say? He consents frequently to suffer rather than not feel. He accustoms himself to a thousand things, which, in their origin, must to have affected him in a disagreeable manner, and which frequently end by converting themselves into wants, or by no more affecting him in any way.* Where, indeed, can we find in Nature objects capable of furnishing us at all times with a dose of activity proportioned to the state of our organization, which its mobility ren-

We have examples in TOBACCO, COFFEE, and, above all, in BRANDY, by the aid of which the EU-ROPEANS have enflaved the NEGROES and subdued the SAVAGES. Here is, perhaps, again the reason why we run to see TRAGEDIES, and the people to the EXECUTIONS of criminals, which is a tragedy for them. In short, the desire of feeling, or being strongly moved, appears to be the principle of CURIOSITY and of that avidity with which we seize on the MAR-VELLOUS, the SUPERNATURAL, the INCOMPRE-HENSIBLE, and every thing that greatly occupies our imagination. Men cling to their religions like savages to brandy.

ders

ders subject to perpetual variation? The most lively pleasures are always the least durable, seeing that they are those which exhaust us the most,

To be happy without interruption, it were needful that the powers of our being were infinite; it were needful that to its mobility, it joined a vigour, a folidity which nothing could be able to change; or it were needful that the objects which communicated motion to us could be able to acquire or lose qualities, according to the different states through which our machine is fucceffively obliged to pass; it were needful that the effences of beings should be changed in the fame proportion as our difpositions, submitted to the continual influence of a thousand causes which modify us without our knowledge and in despite of us. If our machine experiences at each inflant changes more or less marked, ascribable to the different degrees of the elafticity, of the weight, of the ferenity of the air; of the heat and the fluidity of our blood; of the order, or of the harmony between the different parts of our body; if in each instant of our exiftence

57

istence we have not the same tension in the nerves, the same elasticity in the sibres, the same activity in the mind, the same heat in the imagination, &c. &c. it is evident that the same causes, in conserving to us always only the same qualities, cannot always be able to affect us in the same manner. Here is the reason why those objects which pleased us formerly displease us at present; these objects have not changed sensibly; but our organs, our dispositions, our ideas, our modes of seeing and feeling have changed; such is the source of our inconstancy.

If the same objects are not in a state to form constantly the happiness of the same individual, it is very easy to seel that they can be able, yet less, to please all men, or that the same happiness cannot be able to be suitable to all. Beings, various by their temperament, their powers, their organization, their imagination, their ideas, their opinions, their habits, and which an infinity of circumstances, whether physical or moral, have modified diversly, must necessarily form to themselves notions extremely different of

Vol. II. C c happiness.

Those of a MISER cannot be happiness. able to be the same as those of a PRODIGAL; those of a voluptuary as those of phlegmatic man; those of an intemperate, as those of a reasonable man who manages his health. The happiness of each man is in confequence composed of his natural organiza-, tion, and of circumstances, of habits, of ideas, true or false, that have modified him; this organization, and these circumstances, never being the fame, it follows that, that which is the object of the views of one, must be indifferent, or even displeasing to the other; and, as we have already faid, no one can be capable of judging of that which can be able to contribute to the felicity of his fellow man.

We call INTEREST the object to which each man, after his temperament and his own peculiar ideas, attaches his well-being; from whence we fee that INTEREST is never more than that which each of us looks upon as necessary to his felicity. We must again conclude, that no man in this world is totally without interest. That of the MISER, is to amass riches; that of the PRODIGAL,

BITIOUS is to obtain power, titles, dignities; that of the modest philosopher, is to enjoy tranquility; the interest of the DEBAUCHEE is to deliver himself up, without choice, to all forts of pleasures; that of the PRUDENT MAN, is to abstain from those that can be able to injure him. The interest of the wicked is to satisfy his passions at any price; that of the VIRTUOUS MAN, is to merit by his conduct the love and approbation of others, and to do nothing that can be able to degrade him in his own eyes.

Thus, when we fay that INTEREST IS THE ONLY MOTIVE-POWER OF HUMAN ACTIONS, we are by that willing to indicate that each man labours in his manner to his own peculiar happiness, that he places it in some object, whether visible, whether concealed, whether real, whether imaginary, and that the whole system of his conduct tends to obtain it. This granted, no man can be able to be called disinterested; we only give this appellation to him, of whose motive-powers we are ignorant, or whose interests we ap-

C c 2

prove. It is thus that we call him generous, faithful, and difinterested, who feels much greater pleasure in assisting his friends in misfortune, than in preserving in his coffers useless treasures. We denominate disinterested, all men in whom the interest of their glory is far more precious than that of their fortune. In short, we designate, as disinterested, all men who make to the object in which they place their happiness, those facrifices that we judge to be costly, because we do not attach the same value to this object.

We frequently judge very badly of the interest of others, either because the motive-powers that animate them are too much complicated for us to be able to have any knowledge of them; or because, to be enabled to judge like them, it were needful to have the same eyes, the same organs, the same passions, the same opinions: nevertheless, obliged to judge of the actions of men according to their effects on ourselves, we approve of the interest that animates them, every time there results from them any advantage to the human species; it is

thus that we admire valour, generofity, the love of liberty, great talents, virtue, &c. we then do no more than approve the objects in which the beings that we applaud have placed their happiness. We approve their dispositions, when even we are not in a capacity to feel their effects; but in this judgment we ourselves are not disinterested; experience, reflection, habit, reason, have given us a tafte for morals, and we find as much pleasure in being the witness to a great and generous action, as the man of tafte finds in the fight of a fine picture of which he is not the proprietor. Him who has formed to himself an habit of practising virtue, is a man who has unceasingly before his eyes the interest that he has in meriting the affection, the esteem, and the assistance of others, as well as to love and efteem himfelf: filled with these ideas, become habitual in him. he abstains even from concealed crimes that would degrade him in his own eyes; he resembles a man, who, having from his infancy, contracted the habit of cleanlinefs, would be painfully affected at feeing himself dirty, even when no one should be C c 3 the

the witness of it. The honest man is him to whom true ideas have shewn his interest or his happiness in a mode of acting, that others are obliged to love and to approve for their own peculiar interest.

These principles, duly developed, are the true basis of morals; nothing is more chimerical than those which are founded upon those imaginary motive-powers which they place beyond Nature, or upon those innate fentiments which fome speculators have regarded as anterior to our experience; and independent of the advantages that refult to us from it; it is the effence of man to love himself, to be willing to conserve himself, to seek to render his existence happy; * thus interest, or the defire of happiness, is the only motive-power of all his actions; this interest depends on his natural organization, upon his wants, upon his acquired ideas, upon the habits that he has contracted; he is without doubt in error, when a vitiated or-

ganization

^{*} Senecca says, Modus ergo diligendi præcipiendus est homini, id est quo modo se diligat aut prosit sibi; quin autem diligat aut prosit sibi, dubitare dementis est.

ganization or false opinions shew him his well-being in objects useless, or injurious to himself, as well as others; he marches steadily in the paths of virtue when true ideas have made him place his happiness in a conduct useful to his species, approved by others, and which renders him an interesting object to them. Morals would be a vain science, if it did not prove incontestibly to man that his greatest interest consists in being virtuous. All obligation whatever can only be founded upon the probability or the certitude of obtaining a good, or of avoiding an evil.

Indeed, in no one instant of his duration can a sensible and intelligent being lose sight of his conservation and of his well-being; he owes then happiness to himself; but presently experience proves to him, that bereaved of assistance, he cannot quite alone procure for himself all those things necessary to his felicity; he lives with sensible and intelligent beings, occupied like himself with their own peculiar happiness, but capable of assisting him in obtaining those objects that he desires for himself; he discovers that

these beings will not be favourable to him, but when their interest finds itself invovled; he concludes from it, that for his own happiness, it is necessary that he should conduct himself at all times in a manner suitable to conciliate the attachment, the approbation, the efteem, and affiftance of those beings the most capacitated to concur in his views; he fees that it is man who is most necessary to the well being of man, that to cause him to join in his interests, he ought to make him find real advantages in feconding his projects; but to procure real advantages to the beings of the human species, is to have virtue; the reasonable man then is obliged to feel that it is his interest to be virtuous. VIRTUE is only the art of rendering himself happy by the felicity of others. The virtuous man is him who communicates happiness to those beings capable of rendering him happy, necessary to his confervation, who have the ability to procure him an happy existence.

Such then is the true foundation of all morals; merit and virtue are founded upon the nature of man, upon his wants. It is only

only by virtue that he can be able to render himself happy. * Without virtue society can neither be able to be useful or to subsist: it cannot be able to have real advantages. but when it affembles beings animated by the defire of pleasing each other, and disposed to labour to their reciprocal utility; there exists no comforts in those families, where the members who compose them are not in the happy disposition to lend each other mutual fuccours, to affift one the other, to fupport the forrows of life, and to put away by united efforts, those evils to which Nature has fubjected them. The conjugal bonds are only fweet but in proportion as they identify the interests of two beings, united by the want of a legitimate pleasure. from whence refults the maintenance of political fociety, and the means of furnishing it with citizens. Friendship has charms only when it affociates more particularly two virtuous beings, that is to fay, ani-

mated

^{*} Est autem virtus nibil aliud quam in se persecta & ad summum perducta natura. Cicero. De Le-Gieus I. He says, elsewhere, Virtus rationis absolutio definitur.

mated with the fincere defire of conspiring to their reciprocal happiness. In short, is only in shewing virtue that we can be able to merit the benevolence, the confidence, the esteem of all those with whom we have relation; in a word, no man can be able to be happy quite alone.

Indeed, the happiness of each individual of the human species depends on those sentiments to which he gives birth, and which he nourishes in the beings amongst whom his destiny has placed him; grandeur may be able to dazzle them; power and force may be able to wrest from them involuntary homage; opulence may be able to feduce mean and venal fouls; but humanity, benevolence, compassion, equity, can alone obtain without efforts those sentiments for fweet, of tenderness, of attachment, of esteem, of which all reasonable men seel the necessity. To be virtuous, is then to place his interest in that which accords with the interest of others; it is to enjoy those benefits and those pleatures that he diffuses over them. Him. whom his nature, his education, his reflexions, his habits, have rendered fusceptible

tible of these dispositions, and whom his circumstances place in a capacity of satisfying, becomes an interesting object for all those who approach him: he enjoys every instant; he reads with pleasure the contentment and the joy upon all countenances; his wife, his children, his friends, his fervants, shew him an open and ferene countenance, representing to him that content and peace in which he recognizes his own work; every thing that environs him is ready to partake his pleasures and his pains; cherished, respected, looked upon by others, every thing conducts him to agreeable reflections with himfelf; he knows the rights that he has acquired over all hearts; he applauds himfelf for being the fource of a felicity by which all the world is captivated with his condition. The fentiments of love which we have for ourselves, become an hundred times more delicious, when we fee them participated by all those with whom our destiny has connected us. The habit of virtue creates to us wants that virtue fuffices to fatisfy; it is thus that virtue is always its own peculiar reward, and reimburfes ittelf with

with those advantages which it procures for others.

They will not fail to tell us, and even to prove to us, that in the present constitution of things, virtue, far from procuring the well-being of those who practice it, frequently plunges them into misfortune, and places continual obstacles to their felicity; every where we fee it deprived of recompense; what do I say! a thousand examples can be able to convince us that in almost every country it is hated, perfecuted, forced to lament the ingratitude and the injuffice of men. I reply by avowing, that by a neceffary confequence of the wanderings and errors of the human species, virtue rarely conducts them to those objects in which the uninformed make their happiness confift. The greater number of focieties, governed too frequently by men whom ignorance, flattery, prejudice, the abuse of power and impunity concur to render the enemies of virtue, commonly lavish their esteem and their kindness only on unworthy subjects, recompence only frivolous and prejudicial qualities, and never render to merit that iustice

justice which is its due. But the honest man is neither ambitious of the recompences nor the fuffrages of a fociety thus badly conftituted: contented with domestic happiness, he does not feek to multiply those relations which would do no more than augment his dangers: he knows that a vitiated fociety is a whirlwind with which the honest man cannot be able to co-order himself: he puts himself then aside, out of the beaten track. in which he would be infallibly crushed in pieces. He does all the good he is capable of doing in his fphere; he leaves the road free to those wicked men who are willing to descend into the mire; he laments the blows that they give themselves; he applauds himself on his mediocrity that places him in fecurity; he pities those nations made miserable by their errors, and by those passions which are the fatal and neceffary confequence of them; they contain nothing but unhappy citizens; thefe far from taking care of their true interests, far from labouring to their mutual happiness, far from feeling how dear virtue ought to be to them, do nothing but openly combat it or fecretly injure it, and detelt a virtue which constrains their disorderly passions.

When we fay that virtue is its own pecus liar recompence, we are willing fimply to announce, that in a fociety of which the views should be guided by truth, by experience, by reafon, each man would know his true interests, would feel the end of affociation, would find real advantages or motives to fulfil his duties; in a word, would be convinced that to render himself folidly happy, he ought to occupy himfelf with the well-being of his fellow men, and merit their esteem, their kindness, and their asfistance. In short, in a society well constituted, the government, education, the laws, example, instruction, would conspire to prove to each citizen that the nation of which he makes a part, is a whole which cannot be able to be happy and fubfift without virtue; experience would at each moment convince him that the well-being of its parts can only be able to refult from that of the whole body; justice would make him feel that fociety, to be advantageous, ought to be a system of wills, in which those that acted

acted in a mode conformable to the interests of the whole, would infallibly experience an advantageous re-action.

But alas! by the confusion which the errors of men have made in their ideas, virtue difgraced, banished, persecuted, finds no one of the advantages that it has the right to expect. We are obliged to flew it those rewards in a future life of which it is almost always deprived in the actual world; we believe ourfelves obliged to deceive, to feduce, to intimidate mortals, to engage them to follow a virtue that every thing renders incommodious to them; we feed them with distant hopes; we alarm them by fatal terrors to folicit them to virtue which every thing renders hateful to them, or to deter them from committing evil which every thing renders amiable and necessary to them. It is thus that politics and fuperflition, by the formation of chimeras and fictitious interests pretend to supply those true and real motives-powers, which Nature, which experience, which an enlightened government, which the law, which instruction, which example, which rational opinions would be able to furnish men. These, led away by example, authorised by custom, blinded by those passions not less dangerous than necessary, pay no regard to the uncertain promises and menaces that they make to them; the actual interest of their pleasures, of their passions, of their habits, always rise superior to the interest which they show them in obtaining a future well-being, or in avoiding those evils that appear doubtful to them every time they compare them with the present advantages.

It is thus that superstition, far from making men virtuous by principle; does no more than impose upon them a yoke as severe as it is useless: it is only borne by enthusiasts, or by the publicanimous, whom their opinions render either unbappy or dangerous; and who, without becoming better, tremblingly gnaw the seeble bit which they put into their mouth. Indeed, expenience proves to us that religion is a dyke incapable of resisting the torrent of corruption to which so many accumulated causes gives an irresistible force. Still more, does not this religion itself augment the public

diforder

disorder by the dangerous passions which it unlooses and sanctifies? Virtue is almost every where only the lot of some sew souls, sufficiently strong to resist the torrent of prejudice; contented with repaying themselves by the benefits which they dissufe amongst society, of a disposition sufficiently moderate to be satisfied with the suffrages of a small number of approvers; in short, detached from those suite advantages which the injustice of society but too commonly accords only to baseness, to intrigue, and to crimes.

In despite of the injustice that reigns in the world, there are, however, some virtuous men; there are even in the bosom of the most vicious nations, beings benevolent, instructed in the value of virtue, who know that it exacts homage even from its enemies; there are those who are at least contented with those concealed and internal recompences of which no power on earth is capable of depriving them. Indeed the honest man acquires a right to the esteem, the veneration, the confidence and the love even of those whose conduct is exposed by his own; vice is obliged to cede to virtue, of Vol. II. Dd which

which blushingly it acknowledges the supe-Independent of this ascendancy so gentle, so grand, so infallible, when the entire of the universe should be unjust to the honest man, there yet remains to him the advantage of loving and esteeming himself, of recurring with pleasure into the recesses of his own heart, of contemplating his actions with the fame eyes that others ought to do if they were not blinded. No power can be able to ravish from him the merited esteem of himself; this esteem is only a ridiculous fentiment when it is not well founded; it ought not to be cenfured but when it shews itself in a mode that is mortifying and troublesome to others; it is then that we call it ARROGANCE; does it rest itself upon frivolous things? We call it VANITY; if we cannot be able to condemn it, if we find it legitimate and well founded, we call it ELE-VATION, GRANDEUR OF SOUL, noble pride when it rests upon virtues and upon talents truly useful to fociety, when even fociety should be incapable of appreciating them.

Let us cease then to listen to the declamations of those superstitions, who, enemies

to our happiness, have been willing to destroy it even in the inmost recesses of our hearts; who have prescribed to us hatred and contempt for ourselves; who pretend to wrest from the honest man this recompence, which is frequently the only one, that remains in this perverse world to virtue. To annihilate in him this fentiment fo just, of a love of himself, would be to break the most powerful fpring that causes him to do good. What motive-power indeed remains for him in the greater part of human focieties? Do we not fee virtue contemned and discouraged? Audacious crimes, fubtle and cunning vices recompenced? The love of the public weal taxed with folly; exactitude in fulfilling our duties regarded as a bubble; compassion, fenfibility, tenderness and conjugal fidelity, fincere and inviolable friendship, despised and treated with ridicule? Man must have motives to act; he neither acts well or ill. but with a view to his happiness; that which he judges to be his nappiness is his interest; he does nothing gratulously; when they withhold from him the reward of his useful actions, he is reduced either to

Dd2

become

become as wicked as the others, or to pay himself with his own applause.

This granted, the honest man can never be able to be completely unhappy; he cannot be able to be totally deprived of the recompence which is due to him; virtue can be able to take place of all the benefits or happiness of opinion, there is nothing that can be able to compensate the want of virtue. It is not that the honest man should be exempted from afflictions; as well as the wicked man, he is subjected to physical evis; he can be able to be in indigence; he is frequently exposed to calumny, to injutuce, to ingratitude, to hatred; but in the midst of his misfortunes, of his forrows, and of his chagrin, he finds support in himfelf; he is contented with himfelf; he respects himself; he feels his own peculiar dignity; he knows the justness of his rights, and he confoles himfelf with the confidence that he has in the justice of his cause. These supports are not made for the wicked; fubject equally with the honest man to infirmities and to the caprices of his deftiny, he finds in the receffes of his heart only only care, folicitude, regret and remorfe; he finks within himfelf; he is not fustained by his conscience; his mind and his body find themselves overwhelmed on all sides at the same time. The honest man is not an insensible stoic; virtue does not procure impassibility, or an exemption from suffering; but if he is infirm, he has less to complain of than the wicked man who is oppressed by sickness; if he is indigent, he is less unhappy than the wicked in his poverty; if he is in disgrace, he is less overwhelmed than the wicked man who is disgraced.

The happiness of each man depends on the cultivation of his temperament; Nature makes the happy; culture, instruction, reflection, gives value to the soil that Nature has formed, and renders it capable of producing useful and palateable fruits. To be happily born for himself, is to have received from Nature a sound body, organs that act with precision, a just mind, an heart of which the passions and the desires are analogous, and conformable to the circumstances in which our destiny has placed us. Nature then has done every thing for us,

Dd3

when she has given us the quantum of vigou and of energy that is fufficient for us to obtain those things which our station, our mode of thinking, our temperament, have made us defire. This Nature has made us a fatal present, when she has given us a blood too much heated, an imagination too active, impetuous defires for objects impossible to be obtained under our circumstances, or which, at least, we cannot procure without those incredible efforts, that are capable of placing our well being in danger, and of troubling the repose of society. The most happy men are commonly those who poffess a peaceable foul, who only defire those things which they can be able to procure by a labour fuitable to maintain their activity, without caufing them those shocks that are too troublesome and too violent. A philosopher, of whom the wants are easily fatisfied, who is a stranger to ambition, who is contented in the circle of a small number of friends, is, without do .bt, a being much more happily conflituted than an ambitious conqueror, of whom the greedy imagination is reduced to defpair, by having only one world

world to ravage. Him who is happily born, or whom Nature has rendered susceptible of being conveniently modified, is not a being injurious to fociety: it is commonly only difturbed by men who are unhappily born, who are turbulent, who are discontented with their destiny, who are inebriated and infatuated with passions, who are smitten with difficult objects, which put them in a combustion to obtain those imaginary benefits in which they have made their happiness to confist. An ALEXANDER, wants empires to be destroyed, nations to be bathed in blood, cities to be reduced to ashes, to content this passion for glory, of which he has formed to himfelf a false idea, and which his imagination thirsts after; there needs for a Diogenes only a tub and the liberty of appearing whimfical; a Socrates wants nothing but the pleasure of forming disciples to virtue.

Man who by his organization is a being to whom motion is always necessary, must always desire it; here is the reason why a too great facility in procuring for himself his objects, render them presently insipid to him. To feel happiness, it is necessary to

Dd4

make

make efforts to obtain it; to find charms in the enjoyment of it, it is necessary that the defire should be irritated by obstacles; we are immediately difgusted with those benefits which have cost us nothing. The expectation of happiness; the labour necessary to procure it for himself; the varied and multiplied pictures which his imagination forms to him, give to his brain that motion of which he has occasion, make him exercife his faculties, put all his fprings in play; in a word, give him an agreeable activity for which the enjoyment of happiness itself cannot be able to recompence him. Action is the true element of the human mind; as foon as it ceases to act, it falls into ennui and weariness. Our foul has occasion for ideas the same as our stomach has occasion for aliments.*

Thus

* The advantage which the philosophers and the men of letters have over the ignorant, and people out of employment, or unaccustomed to think and to study, is only to be ascribed to the multitude and to the variety of ideas that is furnished to the mind by study and resection. The mind of a man who thinks, finds more food in a good book, than the mind

Thus the impulse that desire gives us is itself a great benefit; it is for the mind that which exercise is for the body; without it we should not find any pleasure in the aliments that are presented to us; it is thirst that renders the pleasure of drinking so agreeable; life is a perpetual circle of regenerated desires and desires satisfied. Repose is only a pleasure to him who labours; it is a source of ennui, of sorrow, and of vice, for him who has nothing to do. To enjoy without interruption is to enjoy nothing; the man who has nothing to desire is certainly more unhappy than him who suffers.

These reflections, sounded upon experience, ought to prove to us that evil, as well as good, depends upon the essence of things. Happiness, to be felt, cannot be able to be continual; labour is necessary to man to make intervals between his pleasures; his body has occasion for exercise; his heart has

mind of an ignorant man in all the pleasures which his riches procure him. To study, is to amass a magazine of ideas. It is the multitude and the combination of ideas that make so much difference between men, and which give them the advantage over other animals.

occasion

occasion for desires; trouble alone can be able to make us taste well-being; it is this which marks the shades in the picture of human life. By an irrevocable law of destiny, men are obliged to be discontented with their condition, to make efforts to change it, to reciprocally envy each other that felicity which no one of them enjoys perfectly. It is thus that the poor man envys the opulence of the rich man, although this is frequently less happy than the needy man; it is thus that the rich man envys the advantages of a poverty, which he sees active, healthy, and frequently, laughing even in the bosom of misery.

If all men were perfectly contented there would no longer be any activity in the world; it is necessary to desire, to act, to labour, to be happy; such is the order of a Nature of which the life consists in action. Human societies can only be able to subsist but by a continual exchange of things, in which men make their happiness to consist. The poor man is obliged to desire, and to labour to obtain that which he knows to be necessary to the conservation of his being; to

nourish himself, to cloath himself, to lodge himself, to propagate his species, are the primary wants that Nature gives him; has he fatisfied these? presently he is obliged to create wants entirely new, or rather his imagination only refines upon the first; it feeks to diverfify them, it is willing to render them more relishing: when once arrived at opulence, and he has run over the whole circle of wants and of their combinations, he falls into difguft. Difpenfed from labour, his body amasses humours; destirute of desires, his heart feels a languor; deprived of activity, he is obliged to participate his riches with beings more active, more laborious than himself: these, for their peculiar interest, charge themselves with the care of labouring for him, to procure for him his wants, to draw him out of his languor, to fatisfy his phantalms. It is thus that the rich and the great excite the energy, the activity, the industry of the indigent; these labour to their peculiar well-being in working for the others; it is thus that the defire of ameliorating his condition renders man necessary to man; it is thus that defires, always regenerating, and never fatisfied are the principle of life, of health, of activity, of fociety. If each man was fufficient for himfelf, there would be no occasion to live in fociety; our wants, our defires, our phantasms, place us in a state of dependence on others, and are the cause that each of us, for his own peculiar interest, is obliged to be useful to those beings who are capable of procuring for him those objects which he has not himself. A nation is only the union of a great number of men connected the one to the other by their wants or their pleafures; the most happy are those who have the fewest wants, and who have the most numerous means of satisfying them.

In the individuals of the human species, as well as in political societies, the progression of wants is a thing that is absolutely necessary; it is sounded upon the essence of man; it is necessary that the natural wants, once satisfied, should be replaced by wants which we call IMAGINARY OF WANTS OF OPINION; these become as necessary to our happiness as the first. Custom, which permits the American savage to go quite naked,

naked, obliges the civilized inhabitant of an European nation to cloath himself; the poor man contents himself with a very fimple cloathing, which ferves him all the year; the rich man is willing to have habilments conformable to each feafon; he would fuffer if he had not the convenience of changing them; he would be afflicted if his garments did not announce to others his opulence, his rank, his fuperiority. It is thus that habit multiplies the wants of the rich man; it is thus that his vanity itself becomes a want, which fets a thousand hands to work who are eager to fatisfy it; in short, this vanity procures for indigent men the means of fubfifting. Him who is accustomed to pomp, to luxury in his habits, whenever he is deprived of these infignia of opulence, to which he attaches an idea of happiness, finds himself as unhappy as the needy wretch who has not wherewith to cover his nakedness. The civilized nations of the present day have commenced by being favage, wandering and vagabond, occupied with the chace and with war, obliged to feek their subsistence with pain: by de-

ıl

y

S

0

h

e

1,

grees they have become stationary, have given themselves up to agriculture, afterwards to commerce; they have refined upon their primitive wants, they have extended their sphere, they have imagined a thousand means to satisfy them: this is the natural and necessary progression in those active beings who have occasion to feel, and who, to be happy, must diversify their sensations.

In proportion as the wants of men multiply themselves, they become more difficult to fatisfy, they are obliged to depend on a greater number of their fellow creatures; to excite their activity, to engage them to concur in their views, they are then obliged to procure for them those objects capable of inviting them, of contenting their defires: a SAVAGE has only to put forth his hand to gather the fruit that is fufficient for his nourishment; the opulent citizen of a flourishing fociety is obliged to put in motion a thousand hands to create the sumptuous repast, and the far fetched messes become necessary to revive his languishing appetite, or to flatter his vanity. From whence we see, that in the same proportion that our

wants

wants are multiplied, we are obliged to augment the means of fatisfying them. RICHES are nothing more than the means. of a convention, by the affiftance of which we are enabled to make a great number of men concur in fatisfying our defires, or to invite them, by their own peculiar interest, to contribute to our pleasures. What does the rich man do, except announce to the needy that he can be able to furnish them with the means of subfishence if they confent to lend themselves to his will? What does the man who has power, except shew to others that he is in a state to furnish the means of rendering them happy? Sovereigns, nobles, men of wealth, appear to us to be happy only because they possess the means or motives sufficient to determine a great number of men to occupy themselves with their happiness.

The more we confider things, and the more we shall convince ourselves that the false opinions of men are the true sources of their misery: happiness is only so rare amongst them but because they attach it to objects either indifferent or useless to their

well-being, or which change themselves into real evils for them. Riches are indifferent in themselves, it is only by the use which they know how to make of them, that they are either rendered of utility or prejudicial. Mo-NEY, indifferent to the favage, who knows not what to do with it, is amaffed by the miser, for fear it should become useless, and fpent by the prodigal and the voluptuary, who make no other use of it than to purchase regret and infirmities. PLEASURES are nothing for those who are incapable of feeling them; they become real evils, when deftructive to ourselves, they derange the œconomy of our machine, make us neglect our duties, and render us despicable in the eyes of others. Power is nothing in itself; it is useless to us, if we do not avail ourselves of it to promote our own peculiar felicity; it becomes fatal to us, as foon as we abuse it; it becomes odious as foon as we employ it to render others miserable. For want of being enlightened to their true interests. those amongst men who enjoy all the means of rendering themselves happy, scarcely ever discover the secret of making them serviceable

or

able to their own peculiar felicity. The art of enjoying is the least understood; it is needful to learn this before we defire; the earth is filled with men who only occupy themselves with the care of procuring the means, without ever knowing the end. All the world defire fortune and power, and yet we fee very few men that these objects render happy.

It is natural, extremely necessary, extremely reasonable, to defire those things which can be able to contribute to the augmenting the fum of our felicity. Pleasure, riches, power, are objects worthy of our ambition and of our efforts, when we know how to use them, to render our existence more agreeable; we cannot be able to cenfure him who defires them, nor despife or hate him who possesses them, but when to obtain them he employs odious means, or when after having obtained them, he makes a pernicious use of them, either for himself or for others. Let us defire power, grandeur, reputation, when we can be able to have pretentions to them, without purchafing them at the expence of our repofe, VOL. II.

Ee

of

s,

ns

er

e-

le

or that of the other beings with whom we live. Let us defire riches when we know how to make a use of them truly advantageous for ourselves and for others; but do not let us ever employ those means to procure them with which we may be obliged to reproach ourselves, or that may draw upon us the hatred of our associates. Let us always recollect, that our solid happiness ought to found itself upon the esteem of ourselves, and upon the advantages which we procure for others, and that of all the objects the most impracticable for a being who lives in society, it is that of being willing to render himself exclusively happy.

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

THE ERRORS OF MEN UPON WHAT CON-STITUTES HAPPINESS, ARE THE TRUE SOURCE OF THEIR EVILS.—REMEDIES THAT WE ARE WILLING TO APPLY TO THEM.

Reason does not by any means forbid man from forming great defires; ambition is an useful passion to the human species, when it has its happiness for its object. Great and elevated fouls are willing to act in a great fphere; geniuses that are powerful, enlightened, beneficent, distribute widely their favourable influence; they have occasion, for their own peculiar felicity, to render a great number happy. So many princes very rarely enjoy a true happiness, because their feeble and narrow souls are obliged to act in a sphere too extensive for their energies. It is thus that by the inaction, the indolence, the incapacity of E e z their

their chiefs, nations are frequently languishing in misery, and are submitted to masters as little calculated to promote their own peculiar happiness as that of their subjects. On the other hand, souls too violent, too much heated, too active, are themselves tormented in the sphere that contains them, and their heat misplaced, becomes the scourge of the human race.* Alexander was a monarch equally injurious to the earth, and discontented with his condition, with the indolent despot whom he dethroned. The souls of the one and of the other were but little proportioned to their sphere.

The happiness of man will never be more than the result of the accord between his desires and his circumstances. The sovereign power is nothing to him who possesses it, if he does not know how to use it to his own peculiar happiness; it is a real evil, if it renders him miserable, it is a detestable abuse, if it produces the missortune of a

portion

^{*} Æstuat infelix angusto limite mundi. SENECA fays of ALEXANDER, post Darium & Indos pauper est Alexander; inventus est qui concupiscerit aliquid post omnia. V. SENEC. EPIST. 120.

portion of the human species. The most powerful princes are ordinarily fuch strangers to happiness, and their subjects are commonly fo unfortunate, only because the first poffess all the means of rendering themselves happy, without ever making use of them, or because they only know how to abuse them. A wife man upon a throne would be the most happy of mortals. A monarch is a man, to whom all his power cannot procure other organs and other modes of feeling than the meanest of his subjects; if he has advantages over him, it is by the grandeur, the variety, the multiplicity of the objects with which he can occupy himfelf, which give a perpetual action to his mind, preventing it from decaying and falling into ennui. If his foul is virtuous and great, his ambition fatisfies itfelf at each moment in the contemplation of the power of reuniting the will of his subjects to his own. of interesting them in his conservation, of meriting their affections, and of drawing the respect and eulogies of all nations. Such are the conquests that reason proposes to all those whom their fate destines to govern E e 3 empires;

e

a

oft

OU

empires; they are fufficiently great to fatisfy the most lively imagination, and the most fpacious ambition. Kings are the most happy of men, only because they have the faculty of making a greater number of happy men, and thus to multiply the causes of the legitimate contentment of themselves.

These advantages of the sovereign power are participated by all those who contribute to the government of states. Thus grandeur, rank, reputation are definable objects for those who are acquainted with the means of rendering them ferviceable to their own peculiar felicity; they are ufeless to those ordinary men, who have neither the energy nor the capacity to employ them in a mode advantageous to themselves; they are detestable, whenever to obtain them we compromise our own happiness and that of society: this is in an error every time it respects men, who only employ, to its destruction, a power that it ought not to approve but when it reaps benefits from its exercise.

Riches, useless to the miser, who is only their miserable goaler, prejudicial to the debauchee, to whom they only procure infir-

mities,

mities, ennui, difgust, can be able to place in the hands of the honest man a thousand means of augmenting the fum of his happiness; but, before we desire riches, we must know how to make use of them; money is only a token, representative of happiness; to enjoy it, is to make use of it to render others happy: here is the reality. Money, according to the contract of men, procures us all those benefits that we can defire; there is only one which it does not procure, which is that of knowing how to make use of it. To have money without a knowledge of enjoying it, is to possess the key of a commodious palace to which we are interdicted entering; to spend it prodigally, is to throw this key into a river; to make a bad use of it, is to make it only ferve to wound us. Give to the well enlightened man the most ample treasures, he will not be overwhelmed by them; if he has a great and noble foul, he will only extend widely his bevelolence; he will merit the affection of a great number of men; he will attract the love and the homage of all those who surround him; he will restrain himself in his pleasures, to the Ee4

Y

the end that he may be able to enjoy them: he will know that money will not re-establish a soul worn out with enjoyment, organs enfeebled by excess, a body enervated, and become from thencesorth incapable of sustaining him but by the necessity of privations; he will know that the abuse of the voluptary stifles pleasure in its source, and that all the treasures in the world cannot be able to renew the sense.

We fee then, that nothing is more frivolous than the declamations of a dark philofophy against the defire of power, of grandeur, of riches, of pleasure. These objects are definable for us, as foon as our condition permits us to have pretenfions to them, or when we have a knowledge of the mode of making them turn to our real advantage; reason cannot be able to censure them or despife them, when to obtain them we wound no one; it will esteem them when we avail ourselves of them to render-ourfelves and others happy. PLEASURE is a good, it is our effence to love it; it is rational when it renders our existence valuable to us; when it does not injure us with ourfelves:

felves; when its consequences are not grievous to others. RICHES are the symbols of the greater part of the benefits of this life; they become a reality, when they are in the hands of a man who knows how to make use of them. Power is the greatest of all benefits, when he who is the depositary of it has received from Nature and education a foul fufficiently great, fufficiently noble. fufficiently ftrong, to extend its happy influence over whole nations, which it places by this means in a legitimate dependance, and which it captivates by its beneficence: WE ONLY ACQUIRE THE RIGHT OF COM-MANDING MEN BUT IN RENDERING THEM HAPPY.

The rights of man over his fellow man can only be founded upon the happiness which he procures for him, or which he gives him reason to hope; without that, the power that he exercises over him, would be a violence, an usurpation, a manifest tyranny; it is only upon the faculty of rendering us happy that all legitimate authority is founded. No man receives from Nature the right of commanding another; but we accord

cord it voluntarily to him from whom we hope for our well-being. GOVERNMENT is only the right of commanding all, conferred on the fovereign, for the advantage of those who are governed. Sovereigns are the defenders and the guardians of the persons, of the property, of the liberty of their fubjects, it is only on this condition that these confent to obey; government is only a robbery as foon as it avails itself of the powers that are confided to it to render fociety unhap-The empire of religion is only founded upon the opinion which they entertain of its having the power to render nations happy; gods would be only odious phantoms, if they rendered men miserable.* Government and religion would only be reasonable inflitutions, but inafmuch as the one and

^{*} CICERO fays, Nish homini Deus placuerit, Deus non erit; "God can only be able to oblige men to "obey him, but in making them know that it is in "his power to render him happy or miserable." See THE DEFENCE OF RELIGION, Vol. I. Pag. 433. We must conclude from these principles, that it is right to judge of religion and of gods after the advantages or disadvantages which they procure to society.

the other should contribute to the felicity of men; it would be folly to submit our-selves to a yoke from which there resulted only evil; it would be injustice to oblige mortals to renounce their rights without advantage for themselves.

The authority which a FATHER exercises over his family is only founded upon those advantages which it is supposed he procures for it. Rank, in political fociety, has only for basis the real or imaginary utility of fome citizens, by virtue of which the others confent to distinguish them, to respect them, to obey them. The rich acquire rights over the indigent and needy, only by virtue of the well-being that they are in a condition to make them experience. Genius, talents of the mind, the sciences, and the arts, have rights over us only in confequence of their utility, of the delight and the advantages which they procure for fociety. In a word, it is happiness, it is the expectation of happiness, it is its image that we cherish, that we effeem, that we adore without ceasing. Gods, Monarchs, the Rich, the GREAT, can be able easily to impose upon

us, to dazzle us, to intimidate us by their power; but they will never be able to obtain the voluntary submission of our hearts, which alone can be able to confer upon them legitimate rights, except for real benefits and virtue. Utility is nothing more than true happiness; to be useful, is to be virtuous; to be virtuous, is to make others happy.

The happiness which they procure for us is the invariable and necessary standard of our sentiments for the beings of our species, for the objects that we desire, for the opinions that we embrace, for those actions on which we decide; we are the dupes of our prejudices every time that we cease to avail ourselves of this standard to regulate our judgment. We shall never run the risque of deceiving ourselves, when we shall examine what is the real utility that results to our species from religion, from laws, from all the institutions, the inventions, and the actions of men.

A fuperficial view can be able fometimes to feduce us, but experience and reflexion reconducts us to reason, which cannot be able to deceive us. It teaches us that plea-

fure

fure is a momentary happiness, that frequently becomes an evil; that evil is a fleeting trouble that frequently becomes a good; it makes us understand the true Nature of objects, and foresee the effects that we can be able to expect; it make us diftinguish those defires to which our wellbeing permits us to deliver ourselves up. from those to the seduction of which we ought to make refistance. In short, it always convinces us that the interest of intelligent beings, who love their happiness and who defire to render their existence happy, wills that they should destroy for themselves all the phantoms, the chimeras, and the prejudices which place obstacles to their felicity in this world.

If we confult experience, we shall see that it is in illusions and sacred opinions that we ought to search for the true source of that multitude of evils with which we every where see the human species overwhelmed. Ignorance of natural causes, has created to man, gods; imposture has rendered them terrible, their fatal ideas haunt him without rendering him better, make him tremble without

without benefit, fill his mind with chimeras, oppose themselves to the progress of his reafon, prevent him from seeking after his happinels. His fears render him the slave of those who deceive him under the pretext of his welfare; he commits evil when they tell him that his gods demand crimes; he lives in misfortune, because they make him believe that his gods condemn him to be misferable; he never dares to resist his gods, nor disentangle himself from his chains, because they give him to understand that stupidity, the renunciation of reason, slothfulness of mind, the abjection of his soul, are the sure means of obtaining eternal felicity.

Prejudices not less dangerous have blinded men upon their governments. Nations do not know the true foundations of authority; they dare not demand happiness from those kings who are charged with procuring it for them; they have believed that sovereigns, disguised as gods, received with their birth the right of commanding the rest of mortals, that they could be able to dispose at their pleasure of the selicity of the people, and were not accountable for the misery which

they

they engendered. By a necessary confequence of these opinions, politics have degenerated into the fatal art of facrificing the interests of all to the caprice of an individual, or of some few privileged and wicked beings. In despite of the evils which they experienced, nations were in adoration before those idols which they had themselves made, and foolishly respected the instruments of their mifery; they obeyed their unjust will; they lavished their lives, their blood, their treasures, to glut their ambition, their infatiable avidity, their regenerated whims and fantasies; they had a stupid veneration for all those who possessed with the fovereign the power of injuring them; they bent their knees before reputation, rank, titles, opulence, pageantry, and oftentation: at length the victims of their prejudices, they expected in vain their wellbeing from fome men, who, unhappy themfelves by their vices, and by their incapacity of enjoying happiness, were but little difposed to occupy themselves with the wellbeing of the people: under fuch chiefs their physical and moral happiness were equally neglected, or even annihilated.

We find the same blindness in the science of morals. Religion, which never had any thing but ignorance for its basis, and imagination for its guide, did not found morals upon the Nature of man, upon his relations with man, upon the duties which necessarily follow from these relations; it prefered founding them upon imaginary relations, which it pretended fubfifted between men and those invisible powers that it had gratuitously imagined and falsely made to speak. They were these invisible gods, which religion always depicted as perverse tyrants, who were the arbiters and the models of the conduct of man; he was wicked, unfociable, useless, turbulent, fanatic, when he was willing to imitate thefe divine tyrants, or conform himself to the lessons of their interpreters. These alone profited by religion and the darkness which they diffused over the human mind; nations knew not Nature, nor reason, nor truth: they had only religion without having any one certain idea of morals or of virtue. When man committed evil against his fellow creature, he believed he had offended his God;

God; he believed himself forgiven in humiliating himself before him, in making him presents, in gaining over his priest to his interests. Thus religion, far from giving a fure, natural and known basis to morals, only gave it a foundation unfleady, ideal, and impossible to be known. What did I say? It corrupted him and his expiations finished by ruining him. When it was willing to combat the paffions of men it attempted it in vain; always enthufiaftic and deprived of experience, it never knew the true remedies; its remedies were disgusting, and suitable only to make the fick revolt against them; it made them pass for divine because they were not made for men; they were inefficacious because chimeras could be able to effect nothing against those passions, to which motives more real and more powerful concurred to give birth and nourish in their hearts. The voice of religion, or of the gods, could not be able to make itself heard in the tumult of focieties, where every thing cried out to man that he could not render himself happy without injuring his fellow creatures: its vain clamours did no more Vol. II. than

e

10

ch

ns

h:

ny

ue.

WO

his

od;

than make virtue hateful, because they represented it always as the enemy to the happiness and pleasures of human beings. In
the observation of their duties, they only
shewed to mortals the most cruel facrifice of
that which was most dear to them, and they
never gave them any real motives to induce
them to make this facrifice. The present
prevailed over the future, the visible over
the invisible, the known over the unknown,
and man was wicked because every thing
told him he must be so in order to obtain
happiness.

It is thus that the fum of human mifery was never diminished; but on the contrary, was accumulated by his religions, his governments, by his education, by his opinions, in a word, by all the institutions which they made him adopt, under the pretext of rendering his condition more pleasant and agreeable. We cannot too often repeat it; it is in error that we shall find the true source of the evils with which the human race is afflicted; it is by no means Nature that renders it unhappy and miserable; it is not an irritated God who

who is willing that he should live in tears; it is not an hereditary depravation that has rendered mortals wicked and unhappy; it is an role to be derived.

The lovernigh good, fo much fought after by tome philotophers, and by others announced with fo much emphasis, can only be confidered as chimera, like unto that marvellous PANACEA, which fome adepts have been willing to pass for an universal remedy. All men are difeafed, the moment of their birth delivers them to the contagion of error; but each of them is diversely affected by it, by a confequence of his natural organization, and of his peculiar circumstances. If there is an universal remedy which they can be able to apply to the divertified and complicated difeases of men, there is, without doubt, only one, and this remedy is TRUTH, which we must draw from Nature.

At the fight of those errors which blind the greater number of mortals, and which they are obliged to suck in with their mother's milk; at the fight of those desires

F 1 2

with

with which they are perpetually agitated, of those passions which torment them, of ' those inquietudes that gnaw them, those evils, as well phyfical as moral, that befiege them on all fides, we should be tempted to believe that happiness is not made for this world; and that it would be a vain enterprize to attempt curing those minds which every thing conspires to poison. When we confider those superstitions that alarm them, divide them and render them irrational; those governments that oppress them, those laws that torment them, that multifarious injustice under which we see groan almost all the people of the earth; in fhort, those vices and those crimes that render the flate of fociety fo hateful almost to all those who find themselves in it; we have great difficulty in defending ourfelves from the idea, that misfortune is the appendage of the human species; that this world is only made to affemble the unhap-Ty; that happiness is a chimera, or at least a point fo fugitive that is impossible it can be fixed.

Those

Those superstitious beings, atrabilious, and nourished in melancholy, see then. without ceafing, Nature, or its Author, exafperated against the human species; they suppose that man, the constant object of Heaven's wrath, irritates it even by his defires, and renders himfelf criminal on feeking a felicity which is not made for him-Struck with feeing that those objects which we defire the most lively manner are never capable of fatisfying our hearts, they have decried these objects as prejudicial, as odious, as abominable; they have prescribed that we should shun them; they have, without any diffinction, routed all those passions the most useful to ourselves, and to the beings with whom we live; they have been willing that man should render himself insensible, that he should become the enemy of himfelf, that he should separate himself from his fellow creatures, that he should renounce all pleafure, that he should refuse happiness, in short, that he should become unnatural. "Mortals! they have faid, ye were born " to be unhappy; the Author of your ex-"istence has destined ye for misfortune; " enter

"enter then into his views and render your"felves miserable. Combat those rebellious
"desires which have selicity for their ob"ject; renounce those pleasures that it is
"your essence to love; attach yourselves to
"nothing here below; sly a society that only
"serves to instame your imagination for
"those benefits that ye ought to result your"selves; break the springs of your souls;
"repress that activity that seeks to put a
"period to your sufferings; suffer, afflict
"yourselves, groan; such is for you the
"road of happiness."

Blind physicians! who have mistaken for a disease the natural state of man! they have not seen that his passions and his desires were essential to him! that to desend him from loving and desiring them, is to take from his being; that activity is the life of society, and that to tell us to hate and to despise ourselves, is to take from us the most suitable motive-power to conduct us to virtue. It is thus, that by its supernatural remedies, religion, far from curing men of their evils, have only increased them and made them desperate; in the room of calming

calming their passions, they render more incurable, more dangerous, and more venemous, those which their Nature has given them only for their conservation and their happiness. It is not by extinguishing our passions that they render us happy; it is by directing them towards those objects truly useful to ourselves and to others.

In despite of the errors with which the human species is blinded; in despite of the extravagance of its religious and political institutions; in despite of the complaints and the murmurs which we are continually making against our destiny, there are happy beings upon the earth. We fometimes fee fovereigns animated by the noble ambition of rendering nations flourishing and happy: we find Antoninus's, Trajan's, Julian's, HENRY's; we meet with elevated fouls who place their glory and their happiness in encouraging merit, in fuccouring indigence. in lending an helping hand to oppreffed virtue. We find geniuses occupied with the defire of wresting the admiration of their fellow citizens by ferving them usefully, and enjoying that happiness which they procure for others.

0

IS

r-

ng

m

of

ng

Do not believe that the poor man himfelf is excluded from happiness. Mediocrity, indigence frequently procure him advantages that opulence and grandeur are obliged to acknowledge and to envy. The foul of the needy, always in action, does not cease to form desires, whilst the rich and the powerful are frequently in the afflicting embarraffment of not knowing what to wish for, or of desiring those objects which it is impossible for them to procure*. His body, habituated to labour, knows the fweets of repose; this repose is the most troublesome fatigue for him who is wearied with his idleness. Exercise, frugality procure the one vigour and health; the intemperance and inertness of the other give him only difgust and infirmities. Indigence sets all the fprings of the foul to work, it is the mother of industry; it is out of its bosom that we see arise genius, talents, merit, to which opulence and grandeur are obliged to pay homage. In short, the blows of fate find in the poor man a flexible reed who yields without breaking.

Thus

^{*} PETRONIUS says, Nescio quomodo bonæ mentis soror est paupertas.

Thus Nature was not a step-mother to the greater number of its children. Him whom fortune has placed in an obscure station, is ignorant of the ambition that devours the courtier, of the inquietudes of the intriguer, the remorfe, the weariness, and the disgusts of the man enriched with the fpoils of a nation of which he does not know how to profit. The more the body labours, the more the imagination repofes itself; it is the diversity of the objects which he runs over that kindles it; it is the fatiety of these objects that causes him disgust? the imagination of the indigent is circumscribed by necessity: he receives but few ideas, he knows but few objects, in confequence he has but little to desire; he contents himself with little, whilft the entire of Nature fuffices with difficulty to content the infatiable defires and imaginary wants of the man plunged in luxury, who has run over or exhaufted all the necessary objects. Those whom prejudice makes us consider as the most unhappy of men frequently enjoy advantages more real and greater than those who oppress them, who despise them, and VOL. II. who Gg

who fometimes are reduced to envy them. Limited defires are a real benefit: the man of meaner condition in his humble fortune defires only bread; he obtains it by the fweat of his brow, he would eat it with joy, if injustice did not commonly render it bitter to him. By the delirium of governments, those who roll in abundance, without being for that reason more happy, dispute with the cultivator even the fruits which the labour of his hands has brought out of the earth. PRINCES facrifice their true happiness and that of their states to those passions, to those caprices which discourage the people, which plunge their provinces in mifery, which make millions unhappy without any advantage for themselves. TYRANNY obliges its Subjects to curse their existence, to abandon labour, and deprives them of the courage of begetting children, who would be as miferable as their fathers: the excess of oppression sometimes forces them to revolt. or to avenge themselves by wicked outrages of the injustice which it has done them. Injustice, by reducing the indigent to despair, obliges them to seek in crime refources fources against their misery. An unjust government produces discouragement in the soul; its vexations depopulate the country, the earth remains without culture, from thence is bred frightful famine, which gives birth to contagion and plagues. The misery of the people produce revolutions; sourced by misfortune, their minds get into fermentation, and the overthrow of empires are the necessary effects. It is thus that physics and morals are always connected, or rather are the same thing.

If the iniquity of the chiefs do not always produce such marked effects, at least it produces slothfulness, of which the effect is to fill society with mendicants and malefactors, which neither religion nor the terror of the laws can arrest, and which nothing can induce to remain the unhappy spectators of a well-being which they are not permitted to participate. They seek their sleeting happiness at the expence even of their lives, when injustice has shut to them the road of labour and of industry, which would have rendered them useful and honest.

Ggz

Let

Let them not tell us then, that no government can be able to render all its subjects happy; it cannot be able, without doubt, to flatter itself with contenting the phantasms of some idle citizens, who know only how to appeale their difgusts by imagination: but it can be able, and it ought, to occupy itself with contenting the real wants of the multitude. A fociety enjoys all the happiness of which it is susceptible as soon as the greater number of its members are nourished, cloathed, lodged, in fhort, when they can be able without excessive labour, to procure for themselves those wants which Nature has rendered necessary to them. Their imagination is contented as foon as they are affured that no power will be able to ravish. from them the fruits of their industry; that they labour for themselves. By a confequence of human folly, whole nations are obliged to labour, to fweat, to bathe the earth with their tears, to maintain the luxury, the phantasms, the corruption of a small number of irrationals; of some useless men, to whom happiness has become impossible, because their bewildered imagination

tion no longer knows any bounds. It is thus that religious and political errors have changed the universe into a valley of tears.

For want of consulting reason, of knowing the price of virtue, of being instructed in their true interests, of having a knowledge in what confifts folid and real happiness, the princes and the people, the rich and the poor, the great and the little, are without doubt, frequently very far removed from being happy; nevertheless, if we cast an impartial glance over the human race, we shall find in it a greater number of benefits than of evils. No man is entirely happy, but he in detail. Those who complain the most bitterly of the rigour of fate, are held, however, in existence, by threads frequently imperceptible, which prevent them from quitting it. In short, habit lightens the weight of our troubles; grief fuspended becomes a true enjoyment; every want is a pleafure in the moment in which it is fatisfied; the abfence of chagrin, and of disease, is an happy state, which we enjoy fecretly and without our perceiving it; hope, which rarely abandons us entirely, helps us to support the most

most cruel evils. The PRISONER laughs in his irons; the VILLAGER, fatigued, returns, finging, to his cottage; in short, the man who calls himself the most unfortunate, never sees death arrive without fright, at least, if despair has not totally disfigured Nature in his eyes*.

As much as we defire the continuation of our being, we have no right to call ourfeives completely unhappy; whilft hope fuftains us, we still enjoy a very great benefit. If we were more just in rendering ourselves an account of our pleasures, and of our pains, we should acknowledge that the fum of the first, exceeded by much. those of the last; we should see that we keep a ve y faithful journal of the evil, and but very little exact of the good. Indeed we should avow that there are few days entirely unhappy during the whole course of our lives. Our periodical wants procure for us the pleasure of satisfying them; our soul is perpetually moved by a thousand objects,

^{*} See what has been faid upon suicide, in Chapter the Fourteenth.

of which the variety, the multiplicity, the novelty rejoices us, suspends our forrows, gives diversion to our chagrins. Our physical evils, are they violent? They are not of a long duration, they conduct us quickly to our period; the forrows of our mind conduct us to it equally. At the same time that Nature resuses us every happiness, it opens to us a door to quit life; do we resuse to enter it, it is that we yet find pleasure in existence. Nations reduced to despair, are they completely miserable? They have recourse to arms, and at the risque of perishing they make efforts to teminate their sufferings.

Because so many men cling to life, we ought to conclude, that they are not so unhappy as they think. Thus do not let us exaggerate the evils of the human species; let us impose silence on that gloomy humour that persuades us that these evils are without remedy; let us diminish, by little and little, the number of errors, and our calamities will diminish in the same proportion. Because the heart of man never ceases to form desires, do no let us conclude that

he is unhappy; because his body has daily occasion for nourishment, let us conclude that it is found, and that it fulfils its functions; because his heart desires, we must from it conclude, that it has occasion at each instant to be moved, that the passions are essential to the happiness of a being who feels, who thinks, who receives ideas, and who must necessarily love and defire that which procures or promifes him a mode of existence analogous to his natural energy. As long as we live, as long as the fpring of our foul fubfifts in its force, this foul defires; as long as it defires it experiences the activity which is necessary to it; as long as it acts it lives. Life, can be able to be compared to a river, of which the waters thrust each other forward, succeed each other, and flow without interruption; obliged to roll over an unequal bed, it encounters, at intervals, obstacles which prevent their stagnation; they never cease to fpurt up, to bound, and to run until they shall be restored to the ocean of Nature.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

THOSE IDEAS WHICH ARE TRUE, OR FOUNDED UPON NATURE, ARE THE ONLY REMEDIES FOR THE EVILS OF MEN. RECAPITULATION OF THIS FIRST PART. CONCLUSION.

Every time that we cease to take experience for our guide we fall into error. Our errors become yet more dangerous and more incurable when they have the fanction of religion; it is then that we never confent to return into the paths of truth; we believe ourselves interested in no longer seeing, in no longer understanding ourselves, and we suppose that our happiness exacts that we should shut our eyes to truth. If the greater part of the moral philosophers have mistaken the human heart; if they have deceived themselves upon its diseases and upon the remedies that could be able to be fuitable to them; if the remedies which VOL. II. Hb

they have administered to it have been inefficacious or even dangerous, it is because they have abandoned Nature; they have resisted experience; they have not dared to consult their reason; they have renounced the evidence of their senses; they have only followed the caprices of an imagination, dazzled by enthusiasm or troubled by fear; they have preferred the illusions which it has shewn them to the realities of a Nature which never deceives.

It is for want of having been willing to feel that an intelligent being cannot be able to lofe fight for a moment of his peculiar conservation; of his real or fictitious interest; of his well-being, permanent or transitory; in short, of his happiness, true or false; it is for want of having considered that defires and paffions are motions effential, natural, necessary to our foul, that the physicians of men have supposed supernatural causes for their wanderings, and have only applied to their evils topical remedies, either useless or dangerous. Indeed, in defiring them to stifle their defires, to combat their propensities, to annihilate their pasfions, fions, they have done no more than given them sterile precepts, vague and impracticable; these vain lessons have influenced no one; they have at most only restrained some mortals whom a peaceable imagination but feebly folicited to evil; the terrors with which they have accompanied them have disturbed the tranquility of some persons, moderate by their Nature, without ever arresting the ungovernable temperament of those who were inebriated with their paffions or carried along by the torrent of habit. In short, the promises and the menaces of superstition have only made fana. tics, enthusiasts, dangerous or useless beings, without ever making men truly virtuous, that is to fay, useful to their fellowcreatures.

These empyrics, guided by a blind routine, have not seen that man as long as he lives, is made to feel, to desire, to have passions, and to satisfy them in proportion to the energy which his organization has given him; they have not perceived that habit rooted these passions, that education sowed them in their hearts, that the vices of

Hh 2

govern-

government strengthened them, that the public opinion approved of them, that experience rendered them necessary, and, that to tell men thus constituted to destroy their paffions, was to throw them into defpair, or elfe to order them remedies too revolting for them to confent to take. In the actual state of our opulent societies, to say to a man, who knows by experience that riches procure every pleasure, that he must not defire them, that he must not make any efforts to obtain them, that he ought to detach himself from them, is to persuade him to render himself miserable. To tell an ambitious man not to defire power and grandeur, which every thing conspires to thew him as the height of felicity, is to order him to overthrow at one blow the habitual fystem of his ideas, it is to speak to a deaf man. To tell a lover of an impetuous temperament to slifle his passion for the object that enchants him, is to make him understand that he ought to renounce his happiness. To oppose religion to such powerful and puissant interests, is to combat realities by chimerical speculations.

Indeed,

Indeed, if we examine things without prepoffession, we shall find that the greater part of the precepts that religion, or that its fanatical and fupernatural morals give to men, are as ridiculous as impossible to be put in practice. To interdict passions to men, is to prevent them from being men; to counsel a person of a violent imagination to moderate his defires, is to counsel him to change his organization, it is to order his blood to flow more fluggishly. To tell a man to renounce his habits, is to be willing that a citizen accustomed to cloath himself should consent to walk quite naked; it would avail as much to defire him to change the lineaments of his face, to deftroy his temperament, to extinguish his imagination, to alter the nature of his fluids, as to command him not to have passions analogous to his natural energy, or to renounce those which habit and his circumstances have made him contract, and have converted into wants.* Such are, however, the remedies

^{*} We see that these counsels, as extravagant as they are, have been suggested to men by all religions.

remedies fo much boafted of, which the greater part of the moral philosophers oppose to human depravity. Is it then furprifing that they produce no one effect, or that they only reduce man to despair by the continual combat which they excite between the passions of his heart, his vices, his habits, and the chimerical fears with which superstition is willing to overwhelm him? The vices of fociety, the objects of which it avails itself to irritate our defires; the pleafures, the riches, the grandeur which the government shews us as attractive seducers; the benefits which education, example, opinion, render dear to us, attract us on one fide, whilst morals vainly folicits us on the other; and thus religion, by its frightful menaces,

gions. The Indians, the Japanese, the Mahometans, the Christians, the Jews, according to their institutions, have made perfection to consist in fasting, in mortifying ourselves, in abstaining from the most rational pleasures, in stying society, in insticting a thousand voluntary torments on ourselves, in labouring without relaxation to counteract Nature. Among the Pagans the priests of the Syrian goddess were not more rational; they mutilated themselves through piety. menaces, throws us into trouble and produces in us a violent conflict without ever gaining the victory; when by a hazard it prevails against so many forces united, it renders us unhappy, it completely breaks the spring of our soul.

Passions are the true counterpoise of pasfions; do not let us feek to destroy them, but let us endeavour to direct them: let us balance those which are prejudicial by those which are useful to fociety. REASON, the fruit of experience, is only the art of choofing those passions which we ought to listen to for our own peculiar happiness. EDU-CATION is the art of diffeminating and cultivating in the hearts of men advantageous passions. Legislation is the art of restraining dangerous passions, and of exciting those which can be able to be advantageous to the public welfare. Religion is only the art of fowing and nourishing in the fouls of men those chimeras, those illusions, those impostures, those incertitudes, from whence fpring passions fatal for themselves, as well as for others: it is only by combating them

that

that man can be able to place himself securely upon the road of happiness.

REASON and MORALS cannot be able to effect any thing upon mortals, if they do not shew to every one amongst them that his true interest is attached to a conduct useful to himself; this conduct, to be useful, ought to conciliate for him the benevolence and favour of those beings necessary to his peculiar felicity; it is then for the interest or the utility of the human species; it is for the esteem, the love, the advantages which refult, that education ought to kindle in early life the imagination of the citizens; thefe are the means of obtaining those advantages which habit ought to render familiar to them, that opinion ought to render dear to them, that example ought to excite them to feek after. The government, by the aid of recompences, ought to encourage them to follow this plan; by the affiftance of punishments, it ought to frighten those who should be willing to diffurb it. It is thus that the hope of a true well being, and the fear of a real evil, will be passions suitable to counterbalance those who should injure fociety;

fociety; these last will at least become very tare, if, instead of feeding men with unintelligible speculations and words devoid of sense, they speak to them of realities, and shew them their true interests.

Man is only fo frequently wicked, but because he feels himself almost always interested in being so; let them render man more enlightened and more happy, and they will render him better. An equitable and vigilant government will prefently fill its ftate with honest citizens; it will give them motives prefent, real, and palpable to do good: it will instruct them, it will make them experience its cares, it will feduce them by the affurance of their peculiar happinels; its promises and its menaces, faithfully executed, will have, without doubt, much more weight than those of superstition, which never proposes but illusory and fallacious benefits, or punishments which those hardened in wickedness will doubt every time that they shall have an interest in doubting them; present motives will touch them much more than motives that are uncertain and diftant. The vicious and the wicked are fo common upon the earth, fo opiniated, fo attached to their irregularities, because there is no one government which makes them find the advantage of being just, honest, and benevolent; on the contrary, every where the most powerful interests solicit them to crime, in favouring the propensities of a vicious organization which nothing has rectified nor carried towards good.* A favage who in his horde does not know the value of money, would certainly not commit a crime; if when you tranfplanted him into our civilized focieties, he should presently learn to defire it, he should make efforts to obtain it, and if he could be able, without danger, he should finish by stealing it, above all, if he had not learnt to respect the property of the other beings who environ him. The favage and the child are precifely in the same state; it is we that render the one and the other wick-The fon of a noble learns from his infancy to defire power, he becomes ambi-

tious

^{*} SALLUST fays, Nemo gratuito malus est. We can say in the same manner, Nemo gratuito bonus.

tious at a ripe age, and if he has the happinets to infinuate himfelf into favour, he becomes wicked, and he will be so with impunity. It is not then Nature which makes men wicked, they are our institutions which determine them to be so. The infant, brought up amongst robbers, can only be able to become a malefactor; if he had been reared amongst honest people, he would have become an honest man.

If we fearch for the fource of that profound ignorance in which we are of morals, and of the motive-powers which can be able to have an influence upon the will of man, we shall find it in the false ideas which the greater part of the speculators have formed to themselves of human nature. It is for having made man double; it is for having distinguished his foul from his body; it is for having drawn his foul from physical laws, to the end that it might be submitted to those fantastical laws emanating from imaginary diffances; it is for having supposed it of a Nature different from all the known beings, that the science of morals is become an ænigma impossible to be unravelled. These suppositions have given room to attribute to it a Nature, modes of acting, properties totally different from those which we see in all bodies. METAPHYSICIANS have feized on them, and by the force of fubtilizing them, have rendered them unintelligible. They have not perceived that motion was effential to the foul as well as to the living body; they have not feen that the wants of the one regenerated themselves without ceasing, as well as the wants of the other; they have not been willing to believe that these wants of the foul, as well as those of the body, were purely physical, and that the one and the other were never moved but by material and physical objects. They have not paid attention to the intimate and continual connexion of the foul with the body; or rather they have not been willing to allow that they were only the fame thing, confidered under different points of view. Obstinate in their supernatural or unintelligible opinions, they have refused to open their eyes to fee that the body in fuffering rendered the foul miserable, and that the foul afflicted, undermined and brought to decay

decay the body. They have not confidered that the pleasures and the pains of the mind have an influence over this body, and plunge it into feebleness or give it activity. They have believed that the foul drew its thoughts, whether pleafant or melancholy, from its own peculiar recesses; whilst its ideas come only to it from material objects, which act, or which have materially acted on its organs; whilst it is not determined either to gaiety or to forrow, but by the permanent or transitory flate in which the folids and the fluids of our body find themselves. In short, they have not acknowledged that this foul, purely paffive, underwent the fame changes which the body experienced, was only moved by his intervention, only acted by his affiftance, and received, frequently without its knowledge and in despite of itself, on the part of the physical objects which move it, its ideas, its perceptions, its fenfations, its happiness or its misery.

By a consequence of these opinions, connected with marvellous systems, or invented to just sy them, they have supposed that the

human

human foul was free, that is to fay, had the faculty of moving itself, and enjoyed the power of acting independently of those impulsions which its organs received from exterior objects; they have pretended that it could be able to resist these impulsions, and without having any regard for them, follow the direction which it gave to itself by its own peculiar energy; in short, they have maintained that the foul was free, that is to fay, had the power of acting without being determined by any exterior force.

Thus, this foul which they have supposed of a different Nature from all the beings in the universe, of which we have a knowledge, had also a mode of action separate; it was, to say thus, an isolated point which was not submitted to that uninterrupted chain of motion which in a Nature, of which the parts are always in action, bodies communicate the one to the other. Smitten with their sublime notions, these speculators did not see that in distinguishing the soul from the body, and from all the beings that we know, they were placed in the impossibility of forming to themselves of it a

true

true idea; they were not willing to perceive the perfect analogy which is found between its manner of acting and that by which the body was affected, no more than of the neceffary and continual correspondence which is found between it and the body. They refused to see, that like all the bodies of Nature, it was subjected to the motion of attraction and of repulsion, ascribable to the qualities inherent in the fubstances which fet its organs in action; that its will, its paffions, its defires, were never more than a confequence of this motion, produced by those physical objects, which are not in its power; and that these objects rendered it happy or miserable, active or languishing, contented or afflicted, in despite of itself and of all the efforts which it could be able to make to render itself otherwise. They have fought in the heavens fictitious motivepowers to move it; they have only prefented to men imaginary interests; under pretext of making them obtain an ideal happiness, they have prevented them from labouring to their true happiness, which they have taken care to prevent them

from knowing; they have fixed their regards upon the empyræum that they might no longer fee the earth; they concealed from them the truth, and have pretended to render them happy by the force of terrors, of phantoms, and of chimeras. In short, blinded themselves, they were only guided by blind men through the path of life, where the one and the other only strayed out of their way.

CONCLUSION.

From every thing that has been faid hitherto, it evidently refults that all the errors of the human species, of every kind, have arisen from their having renounced experience, the evidence of their senses, true reason, to let themselves be guided by imagination, frequently deceitful, and by authority, always suspicious. Man always mistakes his true happiness as long as he neglects the study of Nature; to instruct himself in her immutable laws; to seek in her alone the true remedies for those evils which are the necessary consequence of his actual

actual errors. Man will always be an ænigma to himself as long as he shall believe himself double, and moved by an inconceivable power, of the laws and Nature of which he is ignorant. His faculties, which he calls intellectual, and his moral qualities will be unintelligible to him, if he does not confider them with the fame eyes that he does his corporeal qualities or faculties, and does not fee them submitted in every thing to the same regulations. The fystem of his pretended liberty is supported by nothing; it is at each moment contradicted by experience; it proves to him that he never ceases to be in all his actions under the hands of necessity; a truth which, far from being dangerous to men or destructive of morals, furnishes him with its true basis, fince it makes him feel the necessity of the relations subfifting between sensible beings, and united in fociety, with a view of labouring by their common efforts to their reciprocal felicity. From the necessity of these relations spring the necessity of their duties, and the necessity of those sentiments of love which they accord to that conduct Kk Vor. II. which which they denominate virtuous, or of averfion which they have for that which they call vicious and criminal. From whence we fee the true foundation of MORAL OBLIGATION. which is only the necessity of taking the means to obtain the end which man propofes to himself in society; in which each of us, for his own peculiar interest, his own peculiar happiness, his own peculiar security, is obliged to have and to shew the difpositions necessary to his own peculiar confervation, and capable of exciting in his affociates those fentiments for which he has occasion to be happy himself. In a word, it is upon the necessary action and re-action of the human will, upon the attraction and repulfion necessary to their fouls, that all morals is founded; it is the accord or the concert of the wills and the actions of men that maintain fociety; it is their difcordance which dissolve it, or render it miserable.

We have been able to conclude from all that we have faid, that the names under which men have defignated the concealed causes which act in Nature, and their diverse effects, are never more than necessity, con-

fidered

fidered under different points of view. have found that ORDER is a necessary confequence of causes and effects of which we fee, or believe we fee, the whole, the connection and the routine, and which pleases us when we find it conformable to our being. We have feen in like manner that, that which we call confusion is a confequence of neceffary effects and caules, which we judge to be unfavourable to ourselves, or but little fuitable to our being. They have defignated. under the name of INTELLIGENCE, the necessary cause which operated necessarily the chain of events which we comprise under the name of ORDER. They have called DIVINITY the necessary and invisible cause which put in action a Nature where every thing acts according to immutable and neceffary laws. They have called DESTINY, or FATALITY, the necessary connexion of the unknown causes and effects that we see in this world; they have availed themselves of the word CHANCE to designate the effects which we could not be able to forefee, or of which we were ignorant of the necessary connexion with their causes. In short, they

Kk2

have

have called INTELLECTUAL and MORAL faculties, those effects and those modifications necessary to an organized being, which they have supposed to be moved by an inconceivable agent, whom they have believed distinguished from his body, or of a Nature different from his, which they have designated under the name of soul.

In confequence they have believed this agent immortal, and not diffoluble like the body. We have shewn that the marvellous doctrine of another life is only founded upon gratuitous suppositions, contradicted by reflexion. We have proved that this hypothesis is not only useless to the morals of man, but again, that it is only fuitable to benumb them, to divert them from the care of labouring to their real happiness; to inebriate them with whims and opinions prejudicial to their tranquillity; in short, to lull to fleep the vigilance of legislators, in difpenfing them from giving to education, to the institutions, and to the laws of fociety, all that attention which they owe them. We have made them feel that politics has wrongfully rested itself upon an opinion

opinion but little tapable of fatisfying those passions which every thing conspires to kindle in the hearts of men, who cease to view the future while the present seduces them or carries them along. We have shewn that the contempt of death is an advantageous sentiment, suitable to surnish the mind with courage to undertake that which is truly useful to society. In short, we have made known that which can be able to conduct man to happiness, and we have shewn those obstacles which error opposes to his felicity.

Let them not then accuse us with demolishing without edifying; with combatting errors without substituting truth; with sapping at one and the same time the soundations of religion and of sound morals. This last is necessary to man, it is sounded upon his Nature; his duties are certain, and ought to last as long as the human race; it imposes an obligation on us, because without it neither individuals nor societies could be able to subsist nor enjoy those advantages which their Nature obliges them to desire.

Hear then these morals established upon experience and upon the necessity of things;

do not listen to those superstitions founded upon reveries, upon impostures, and upon the caprices of imagination. Follow the lessons of these humane and gentle morals. which conduct us to virtue by the voice of happines: let us shut our ears to the inefficacious cries of religion, which can never be able to make us love a virtue that it renders hateful and hideous, and which renders us really unhappy in this world, in expectation of those chimeras which it promises us in another. In fhort, let us see if reason without the affiftance of a rival, which prohibits it, will not conduct us more furely towards that end which to which tend all our views.

Indeed what benefits has the human species hitherto drawn from those sublime and supernatural notions with which theology has, during so many ages, sed mortals? All those phantoms created by ignorance and by imagination; all those hypotheses, as subtle as they are irrational, from which experience was banished; all those evils devoid of meaning, with which languages are filled; all those fanatical hopes, and those panic

panic terrors, of which they have availed themselves to act upon the will of men. have they rendered them better, more enlightened to their duties, more faithful in fulfilling them? All those marvellous syftems, and those fophistical inventions with which they support them, have they carried conviction to our mind, reason in our conduct, virtue in our hearts? Alas! all thefe things have only plunged the human understanding into that darkness from which it cannot be able to withdraw itself, fown in our hearts dangerous errors, given birth to those fatal passions in us, in which we shall find the true fource of those evils with which our species are afflicted.

Cease then, O man! to let thyself be disturbed and troubled by those phantoms which thy imagination, or which impossure has created. Renounce thy vague hopes, disengage thyself from thy overwhelming fears; follow without inquietude the necessary route that Nature has marked out for thee. Strew it with flowers if thy destiny permit; remove, if thou canst be able, the brambles which are scattered over it. Do

not plunge thy views into an impenetrable futurity; its obscurity is sufficient to prove to thee that it is useless or dangerous to fathom. Think then entirely of rendering thyself happy in the existence which is known to thee. Be temperate, moderate, reasonable, if thou wilt conserve thyself; be not prodigal of pleasure, if thou seekest to render it durable. Abstain thyself from every thing that can be able to be injurious to thyfelf and to others. Be truly intelligent, that is to fay, learn to love thyfelf, to conserve thyself, to fulfil the end that thou proposest to thyself at each moment. Be virtuous, to the end that thou mayest render thyself solidly happy, to the end that thou mayest enjoy the affection, the esteem, and the assistance of those beings that Nature has rendered necessary to thy peculiar felicity. If they are unjust, render thyfelf worthy of the applause and the love of thyfelf; thou shalt live content, thy ferenity wilt not be disturbed; the end of thy career, exempted from remorfe, as well as thy life, shalt not slander it. Death will be to thee the door to a new existence in a new order:

order; thou wilt then be submitted as well as thou art at present, to the eternal laws of fate, which ordains, that to live happy here below, thou shouldst make others happy. Let thyself then be gently drawn along by Nature, until thou shalt sleep peaceably in that bosom which has given thee birth.

For thou, wicked unfortunate! who art found in continual contradiction with thy felf! disorderly machine, who can neither accord thyfelf with thy peculiar nature, nor with that of thy affociates! do not fear in another life the punishment of thy crimes: art thou not already cruelly punished? Thy follies, thy shameful habits, thy debaucheries, do they not damage thine health? Dost thou not linger out in difgust a life satigued with thine excesses? Does not ennul punish thee for thy fatiated paffons? Vigour and gaiety, have they not already given place to feeblene's, to infirmities, to regret? Thy vices, do they not every day dig the grave for thee? Every time that thou hast stained thyself with any crime, hast thou dared, without fright, to return into thyfelf? Hast thou not found remorfe, terror, and shame established in VOL. II. thine

thine heart? Hast thou not dreaded the scrutiny of thy sellow creatures? Hast thou not trembled quite alone, and unceasingly seared that truth, so terrible for thee, should unveil thy dark transgressions? Do not then any longer sear a future life, it will put an end to those merited torments that thou hast inslicted on thyself; death, in delivering the earth from an incommodious burthen, will deliver thee from thyself, THY MOST CRUEL ENEMY.

AND VOLUME THE SECOND.

